



North Kesteven
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Become a North Kesteven Councillor 2023

Have you ever wanted to speak on behalf of your local community and to help local people?

Want to get more involved in your local community?

Would you like to influence the way local services are provided?



represent

listen

engage

support

Contents

What do Councils do?	4
About North Kesteven	5
What do Councillors do?	7
Who can be a Councillor?	8
Can I be elected to more than one Council?	8
Do I have to belong to a political party?	8
How much of my time will it take up?	9
Will I be paid?	10
What support can I expect?	11
Will I get time off work?	12
Who pays for my election costs?	13
I'd like to become a Councillor - what next?	14
Useful contacts	15
Political party useful contacts	15
Other useful contacts	15



What do Councils do?

Councils provide local services to people living or working in their areas. They are made up of smaller areas known as wards. There are different types of Councils, which are responsible for all local services; County Councils and District Councils – where responsibilities are shared between them.

In general terms, elected Councillors make the decisions that guide the Council and paid Council staff carry these out, according to laws and guidelines. Councils also work in partnership with other local

organisations such as the NHS, Fire and Rescue, Police & Crime Commissioner and local police teams. Councillors make sure that these organisations work together to meet the needs of local people.

There are also Parish or Community Councils, which have responsibility for some local services. These are often involved in managing services such as Litter Picking, Dog Control, Bus Shelters, Cemeteries, Allotments, Public Toilets, Playing Fields, Village Halls and War Memorials.



About North Kesteven

The District of North Kesteven is a large, diverse, rural area, stretching from the Witham in the east almost to the Trent in the west and from the sparsely populated villages to the south of Sleaford to the more densely populated Lincoln fringe in the north.

North Kesteven is one of seven districts in Lincolnshire and covers an area of 92,000 hectares (356 square miles).

The District is characterised by small settlements and large areas of farmland and has been classified as being mainly rural (ONS 2017).

There are around 100 communities in the North Kesteven District. The population estimate of the District is 118,000 (Census 2021).

There are two towns with approximately 19,800 people in Sleaford and 16,900 in North Hykeham (Census 2021). 40% of North Kesteven's residents live in communities in the Lincoln "fringe";

the area immediately surrounding Lincoln City (including North Hykeham) and just over 17% live in Sleaford. The remainder are almost equally split between the rural wards to the west and to the east of the A15.

North Kesteven District Council is a democratic organisation with 43 Councillors representing 24 wards following a recent boundary review. Councillors – who we also call Members – are elected for a four year term.

The four year term of office for the District Council elections taking place on Thursday 4 May 2023 will cover 2023-2027.



The current political makeup of the Council (as at October 2022) is as follows:

- **The NK Administration Group - 30**
- **North Kesteven Independent Group (Lincolnshire Independents and Independents) - 11**
- **Unaligned - 2**

The Council operates a 'Strong Leader' style of government, with the Leader being appointed by the Council, who then appoints two or more Councillors (up to a maximum of 10 including the Leader) to the Executive Board. Those Councillors will be members of the political group that has the majority of Council seats.

The Executive Board at North Kesteven comprises six Councillors and appointments are made by the Leader of the Council.

The Council's policy framework and budget are set by the full Council of 43 Members, but all executive decisions, the day to day work of the Council, are taken by or on behalf of the Executive Board.

The Councillors usually meet as a full Council 7 times a year. Specific items of business, such as approving the level of Council Tax, must be considered by the full Council.

Individual planning and licensing decisions are non-executive matters and decisions are taken by separate committees of the Council.

There are also two Scrutiny Committees to act as a check and balance on decisions taken by the Executive Board. This allows Councillors who are not in the Executive Board to review and scrutinise matters affecting citizens.

Information about membership, agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website at: www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/your-council/how-the-council-works/decision-making/



What do Councillors do?

A Councillor's primary role is to represent local residents in their ward, providing a bridge between the community and the council.

The role of a Councillor can be very varied and it is up to each individual Councillor how they work.

Ward responsibilities / community advocate role:

- represent the authority to the community, and the community to the authority;
- listen to and represent the views of residents; perhaps holding local ward surgeries;
- advise residents of the Council services available;
- undertake case work for residents and act as an advocate to help resolve concerns;
- communicate with local people and respond to enquiries;
 - about decisions that affect them,
 - about opportunities in the community,
 - regarding the rights of constituents in North Kesteven,
 - as to why decisions are made;
- make sure services are delivered effectively in the ward;
- encouraging residents to engage and participate;
- attend Parish or Town Council meetings as considered appropriate.

Council responsibilities:

- develop and maintain a working knowledge of the other organisations and services which serve the District. This may also involve you in the consultative processes with the community and with other organisations;
- regularly attend meetings as appropriate, contributing actively to any required decision making, based on the evidence available;
- developing and reviewing council policy;
- help develop the Council's budget and agree the level of Council tax;
- represent the Council on various outside bodies;
- scrutinising decisions taken by Councillors on the Executive Board;
- regulatory, quasi-judicial and statutory duties;
- keep up to date with all developments affecting the District and the Council, including Government policies and prospective legislation. This will include awareness of progress in preparing, agreeing and delivering the Council's corporate priorities, its policies and procedures;
- regularly attend training to ensure that knowledge is kept up to date.

Your role on the Council as a whole is to plan, run, monitor and develop Council business. Councillors are essential to deciding what is in the public interest amidst a range of conflicting issues and views.

Who can be a Councillor?

You do not need any formal qualifications to become a Councillor.

Life experience is probably the best thing you can bring to the role. This could include for example skills gained through volunteering or working with community groups. You need to be a well organised individual, and someone who can apply themselves to problems. You will also need to be able to communicate well with a wide range of public and professional bodies.

To stand for election, on the day of nomination, you must be:

- 18 or over; and a British or eligible EU or commonwealth citizen.

And you must be:

- registered to vote in North Kesteven; or
- for the whole 12 months preceding:
 - » you must have occupied, as owner or tenant, any land or premises in North Kesteven; or
 - » worked (as principal employment) in North Kesteven; or
 - » lived in North Kesteven.

You may not be able to be a Councillor if you:

- work for North Kesteven District Council;
- hold a politically restricted post for another authority;
- are subject to a bankruptcy (or interim bankruptcy) restrictions order, a debt relief (or interim debt relief) restrictions order;
- have served a prison sentence (including suspended sentences) of 3 months or more within 5 years prior to the election;
- have been disqualified under the Representation of the People Act 1983 in regards to corrupt or illegal practices;
- have been surcharged in excess of £2000 by the auditor, or court

Can I be elected to more than one Council?

Yes you may be a Councillor for several Councils at the same time – such as District Council, County Council and Parish Council.

Do I have to belong to a political party?

No, although the majority of people become Councillors as a result of joining a political party. However some people stand for election as independents (candidates who do not belong to any political party).

How much of my time will it take up?

It is for you to decide the level of commitment you are able to give to being a Councillor. The time a Councillor will spend on Council work will vary depending on the size of the area they represent and any special duties they may have. It could range from a few hours each week to a few hours each day at busier times. Generally, Councillors tend to set the number of hours they can allocate to suit their personal circumstances.

Some of the issues you need to consider:

- How your role as a Councillor will impact on any family and personal relationships – you will need their support and understanding as you may be spending a lot of your spare time on Council business.
- The people you represent will look to you for help in dealing with their problems. You are likely to receive a lot of post, emails and a great many telephone calls, and not every caller will telephone at what you might think is a reasonable hour!
- You may spend some of your time visiting constituents at their homes, or at the Council offices, and you may also have to meet with officers of the Council to help you with any issues.
- There are usually seven full Council meetings each year, which you will be expected to attend.
- You will be a member of at least one committee. Nearly all committee meetings are held at 5pm. Your meetings/commitments may not be evenly spread out over the cycle so some weeks you may be out more evenings than others.
- Many Councillors represent the Council on one or more outside bodies. Background reading and attendance at meetings of these bodies would increase your time commitment.
- For most of the meetings you attend there will be papers that you will need to read beforehand. These papers can be quite detailed and take time to read and understand.
- If you are elected as a chairman, spokesperson or member of the Executive Board, the role can be very demanding.
- If you are a member of a political party there will be additional calls on your time to attend political group meetings. Political groups require their members to attend group meetings in advance of Council meetings and possibly training events/seminars organised by the political party.
- Councillors are required to undertake certain essential (mandatory) training, and there are also development events/briefings to support and guide you in your role as a Councillor throughout the year. Commitment to training can be intensive for the first six weeks.

Your role on the Council as a whole is to plan, run, monitor and develop Council business. Councillors are essential to deciding what is in the public interest amidst a range of conflicting issues and views.

Will I be paid?

There is no salary for being a Councillor. However, you will be paid an allowance to reimburse you for time and expenses incurred whilst on Council business.

Councillors with special responsibilities (such as Chairman of a committee, or Executive Board Member) receive greater allowances. Councillors can claim for travel, subsistence and carer's allowances.

Communication with Councillors is mostly electronic with devices provided. Competency in IT skills is highly desirable.

For more information about the Members' Allowance Scheme please visit the Council's website at www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/your-council/facts-and-figures-about-the-council/council-transparency-and-spending/

At the time of publication of this guide, every North Kesteven District Councillor is paid a basic allowance of £5,634 per annum plus travel costs in accordance with the Member Allowance Scheme.



What support can I expect?



A comprehensive induction support programme is arranged for all elected Councillors with some essential (mandatory) training before you are able to serve on certain committees.

North Kesteven District Council is committed to the continuous support and development of all its members.

As part of this continuous development, we have a rolling 12-month member development programme of training and briefing events, along with a personal development plan for each Councillor.

The District Council has a strong officer - Councillor working relationship and so Councillors can expect help and support from officers.



Democratic Services provides full-time dedicated support to meet the needs of Councillors. One of the team will be allocated as your 'buddy' during the induction period.

You will be given an electronic device for Council business, and a Council email address.

You will also have your own website pages for publishing information relating to your work as a Councillor.

The Members' Room, adjacent to the Democratic Services Office, will be available to you with access to a desk space and quiet space to read.

In 2022 the Local Government Association published a new guide for disabled candidates, called 'Improving access to local government elected office for disabled people.' This guide aims to provide information to help disabled people consider becoming a councillor and covers key areas of the role. It has been produced with the help of disabled councillors.

For more details, please visit

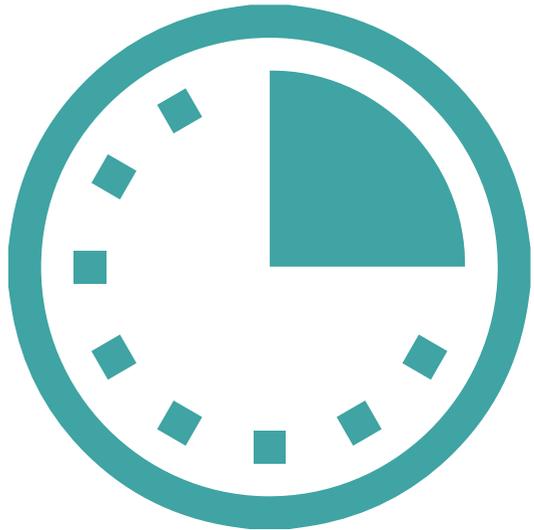
<https://www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor/resources/improving-access-local-government-elected-office-disabled-people>

Will I get time off work?

If you are working, by law your employer must allow you to take a reasonable amount of time off during working hours to perform your duties as a Councillor. The amount of time off will depend upon your responsibilities and the effect of your absence on your employer's business.

The details obviously have to be worked out between employer and employee but many employers see the importance of this work and do what they can to support their Councillor employees. Many employers also recognise that the skills people develop as Councillors are also very useful in the workplace.

You should discuss this with your employer before making the commitment.



Who pays for my election costs?

If you decide to become a Councillor and spend money on your campaign, it is important to note that you have to pay for your own publicity material, property, services or items used for the campaign.

However, if you are a member of a political group or some other group, you may find that financial help is available. You will need to check this with your political party or group.

Furthermore, although you or your party/group pays for the election expenses, you must keep all your receipts. You will need to submit a statement of election expenses, supported

by receipts, shortly after the Election. There is a limit on election expenditure and more information will be available in the candidates nomination pack.



I'd like to become a Councillor – what next?

The next set of Council elections take place on 4 May 2023.

Full details of the electoral process, including the nomination procedure, will be available in a candidates nomination pack.

There is a prescribed period during which nominations must be submitted.

A briefing event for those interested in standing as candidates will be held by the Council to explain more about the election process including information about postal votes, where the count of the votes will be held, where the polling stations are going to be and to answer any questions you may have.

The nomination pack will include nomination forms, timetables and guidance notes.

Once you have decided to stand for election as a District Councillor you will need to be proposed and seconded by two people.

It is your responsibility, or your Agent's, to present nomination papers to the returning officer before the statutory deadline. During the four year term of office there may be a by-election due to resignation or death of councillor. The information in this guide also applies to By-Elections.

It is strongly recommended that you make an appointment to submit the "nomination papers".

In the run up to the election, candidates can have a copy of the electoral register for the ward for which they are standing, which lists residents who can vote at the next election.

You must be aware of Data Protection and how the General Data Protection Regulations, which came into force on 25 May 2018, affect you and the data you hold. Please check the Electoral Commission's Guidance for further information.

More information is available at:

www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/your-council/how-the-council-works/your-councillors/becoming-a-councillor

www.n-kesteven.gov.uk

or upon request from Electoral Services:

Email: **elections@n-kesteven.gov.uk**

Phone: **01529 308352**

Write: **Electoral Services**

NKDC

Council Offices

Kesteven Street

Sleaford

NG34 7EF

Useful contacts

Political party useful contacts:

Conservative:
www.conservativecouncillors.com

Labour:
www.labour.org.uk

Liberal Democrat:
www.libdems.org.uk/Councillors

Green Party
www.gp.org

UKIP
www.ukip.org

If you are interested in representing the Green Party or another established smaller party, contact the Local Government Association's group for independent Councillors:

www.lga.gov.uk/lga-independent

Other useful contacts:

- **Be a Councillor:**
www.local.gov.uk/be-councillor/becoming-councillor
A website dedicated to providing advice to prospective new Councillors; including a detailed guidance booklet and testimonials from existing Councillors.
- **Electoral Commission:**
www.electoralcommission.org.uk
Guidance for candidates and information on the electoral cycle.
- **The Local Government Association:**
www.local.gov.uk
Represents Councils in England and Wales and exists to promote better Local Government.
- **Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities:**
www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-levelling-up-housing-and-communities
Provides news and information on the local government sector.

For further information about standing as a candidate and the local election process please contact:

Email: elections@n-kesteven.gov.uk
Phone: **01529 308352**
Write: **Electoral Services**

**NKDC, Council Offices,
Kesteven Street,
Sleaford, NG34 7EF**

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Councillor



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DISTRICT COUNCIL

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