



# The CTC Councillor

**Welna Bowden** represents CTC members in the North West. She explains why she stood for election and what the role entails

**S**tand for CTC Council', the headline said in Cycle magazine. Welna Bowden did. She was elected to serve on Council for a three-year period starting in 2010, representing members from her region and also helping to decide, ultimately, what CTC does.

'When the call for nominations was published in Cycle, I looked at the current Council and was struck by the fact that there were very few women on it,' she says. 'I also felt that my interests as a working mum were not represented at all.'

'I mentioned this to my local CTC group, who promptly suggested that I stand for Council! I got the required number of signatures and sent my form off. I didn't have high hopes as I hadn't been a regular rider with the usual groups, so I didn't think people would vote for me as they wouldn't know me. But I got through with a good majority. And I love every minute of it!'

CTC Councillors are unpaid volunteers, although they can claim expenses for things like travel to CTC meetings. The workload, Welna suggests, isn't too onerous. 'National Council meetings are usually held in London, and always on a Saturday. We have about four to six of those a year. I also get queries from North West-based CTC members, which I refer to National Office for answers. And in September and October, the other North West CTC Councillor (David Robinson) and I always try to get to as many local AGMs between us as possible.'

She is, she says, a people person, and enjoys her role because of the opportunities it provides to meet other cyclists. But that, you sense, is a side-benefit from the main reason for being on CTC Council. 'I get to influence national decisions, which is a real opportunity. Sometimes you have to dig in your heels and disagree on behalf of the members; sometimes you have to go with the flow. The decisions should be in the best interests of my North West members – unless the majority rule.'

'I believe very strongly in the rights of the members. As such, I want to know what they are happy – and unhappy – about, and what I can do to make it better.'



**"I stood for election as I felt that my interests as a working mum were not represented on Council"**

As well as meeting CTC members at local AGMs, Welna meets up with them out on the road – and on the internet. 'I'm a grassroots member,' she says. 'I usually ride with the local CTC women's group, the Fabulous Ladies, and also ride local events such as the President's Ride and the CTC Spring Tourist Trial. I have started to ride with other women's groups in the North West, as you meet many more members that way in an informal setting. I'm also a fan of Facebook and Twitter. One of the first things I did when I became a Councillor was to set up a Facebook page for CTC North West. We talk about all things cycling.'

Like other CTC Councillors, Welna is a keen cyclist herself, listing commuting, leisure cycling and touring as her main interests. She's ridden from Land's End to John o'Groats, through Holland with her family, and is planning a trip down the Rhine.

As well as enthusiasm for cycling, she brings to Council skills developed through work. 'I have an up to date knowledge of the Equality Act, and an interest in equality and diversity. As such, I have been appointed as the CTC equality champion. I also sit on the CTC Management Committee, as I have extensive experience in senior management.' (One of her qualifications is an MSc in Human Resource Management.)

Different Councillors bring different skills and viewpoints to the table, of course, and that's why Welna urges other CTC members to stand for election – particularly women. 'Go for it!' she says. 'I am a working mother and have other interests too, such as church activities, fostering and gardening. There are currently only two women Councillors, and one us – Helen Vecht in London – retires at the end of this year. We need more women on Council to make it more representative and to provide that balance that only women can bring to a board!'

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For more information about CTC Council, or standing for election, see the website [ctc.org.uk/council](http://ctc.org.uk/council)