



Electoral Arrangements survey 2015

Background

- Invitations were sent to all elected members in April 2015
- 27 responses were received though not all respondents answered each question.

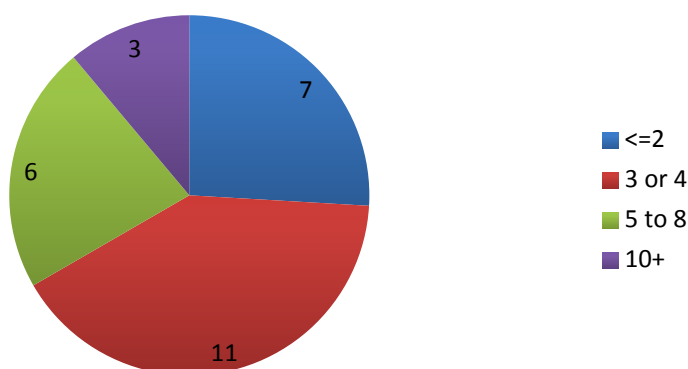
Analysis of data

Q1) How many committee meetings do you attend each month in your capacity as a Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council member?

Amongst the 27 respondents who answered this question, there was a range of answers.

- Seven attended no more than two meetings
- Eleven attended three or four meetings
- Six attended five to eight meetings
- Three attended at least 10 meetings.

Figure 1: How many committee meetings do you attend each month in your capacity as a Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council member? 27 responses

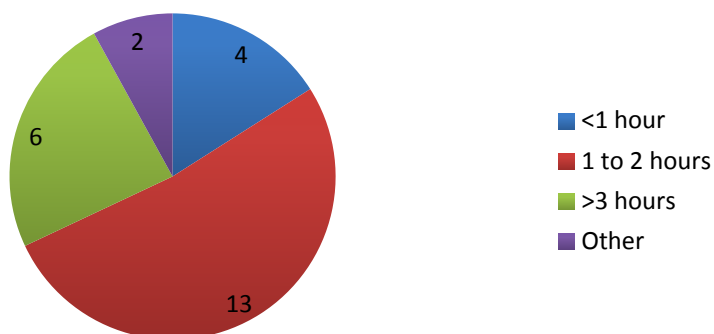


Q2) On average, how long do you spend preparing for each of these meetings, i.e. reading agendas, raising queries, research etc.?

Again, there was some variance amongst the 25 respondents' answers.

- Four spent up to one hour
- 13 spent between one and two hours
- Six spent at least three hours
- Two gave non-time specific responses.

Figure 2: On average, how long do you spend preparing for each of these meetings, i.e. reading agendas, raising queries, research etc.? 25 responses

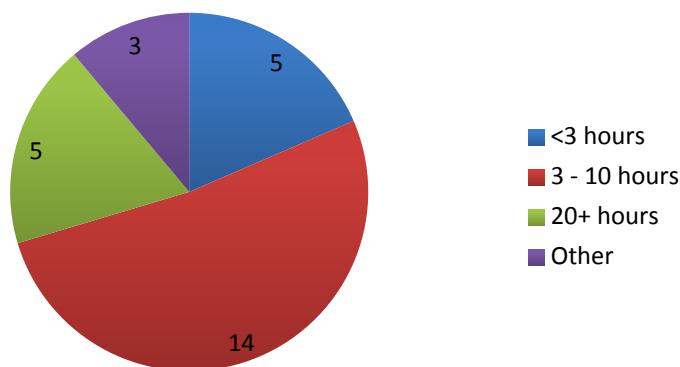


Q3) How much time do you spend on average each week on casework and queries from constituents?

All 27 respondents answered this question.

- Five spent up to three hours
- 14 spent three to ten hours
- Five spent at least 20 hours
- Three gave non-time specific responses.

Figure 3: How much time do you spend on average each week on casework and queries from constituents? 27 responses



Q4) Do you hold surgeries for your residents? If so, how regularly and how long do they last?

All 27 respondents answered this question.

- Two-thirds (18) do hold them
 - 11 held them monthly
 - Four held two each month
 - Two held them weekly
 - One held them as an when were needed
 - Two were for three hours
 - Ten had surgeries that lasted for two hours
 - Five were for one – two hours

- One was for 'as long as it takes'
- One-third (9) did not hold them.

Figure 4: Do you hold surgeries for your residents? 27 responses

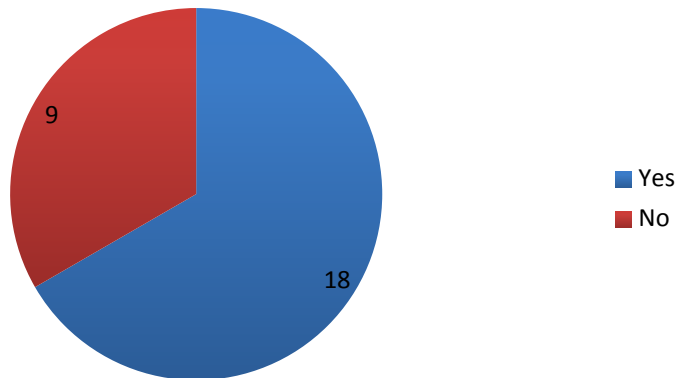


Figure 5: How often do you hold surgeries?

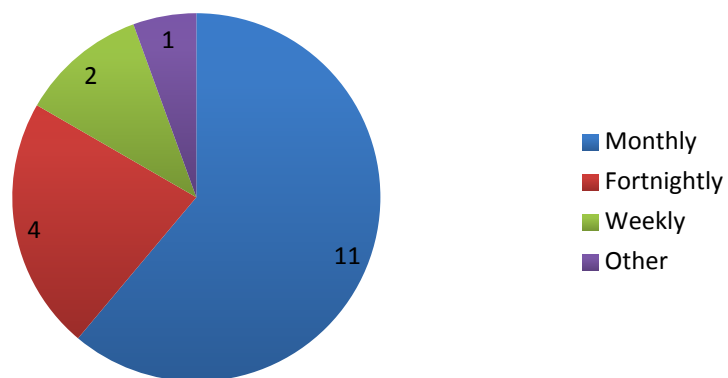
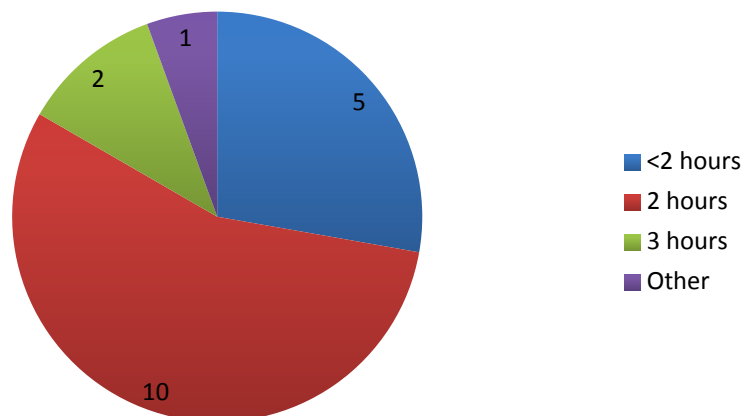


Figure 6: How long do the surgeries last? 18 responses



Q5) Do you produce newsletters for residents (not including election literature)?

All 27 respondents answered this question.

- 17 (63 per cent) did produce them with 16 answering the follow-up questions
 - Seven said twice a year
 - Four said quarterly
 - Three said every two months
 - Three said monthly
- 10 (37 per cent) did not produce them

Figure 7: Do you produce newsletters for residents? 27 responses

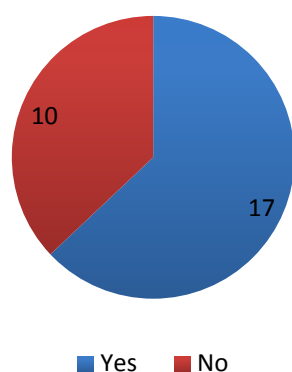
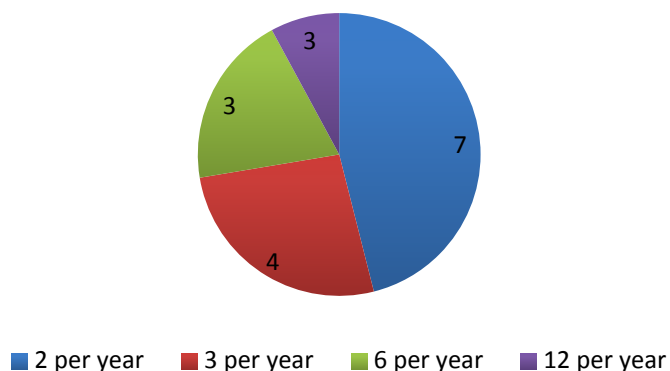


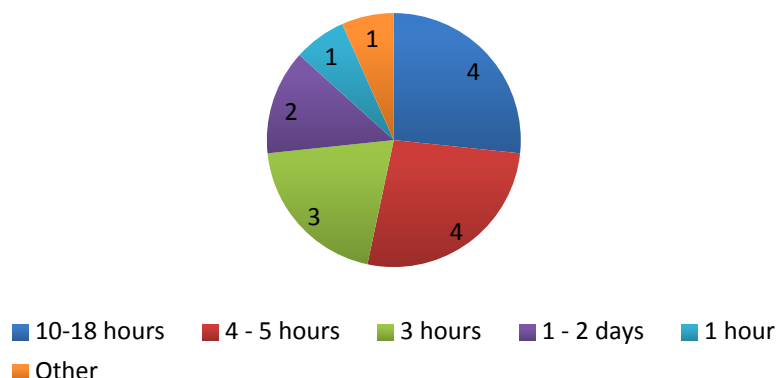
Figure 8: How often do you produce newsletters? 17 respondents



Q5b) How much of your time is taken to produce each edition?
There were 16 responses.

- Four said between 10 and 18 hours
- Four said around four to five hours
- Four said around three hours
- Two said between one and two days
- One said it depends on content
- One said around one hour

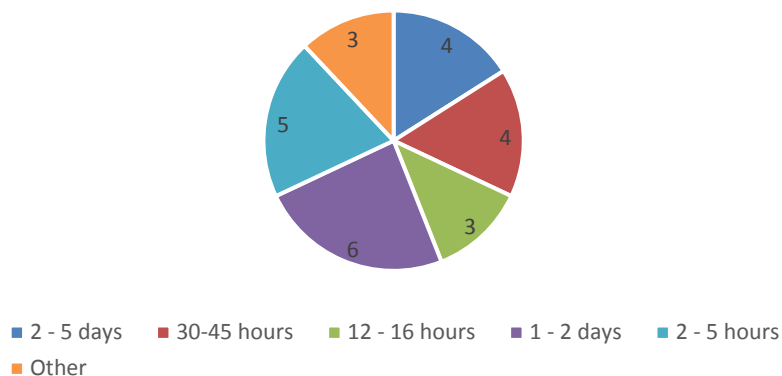
Figure 9: How much of your time is taken to produce each edition? 15 responses



Q6) How much time on average do you spend on producing election literature?
25 respondents answered this question.

- Four spent two to five days
- Four spent between 30 – 45 hours
- Three spent between 12 – 16 hours
- Six spent between two - five hours
- Five spent one to two days
- Three spent unspecified amounts

Figure 10: How much time on average do you spend on producing election literature? 25 responses



Q7) In the past year have you held any public meetings for residents?
All 27 respondents answered this question.

- 52 per cent (14) had held meetings
 - Two had held 12 meetings
 - One had held six meetings
 - Four had held four meetings
 - Three had held three meetings
 - Two had held two meetings
 - Two had held one meeting
- 48 per cent (13) had not held any meetings.

Figure 11: In the past year have you held any public meetings for residents? 27 responses

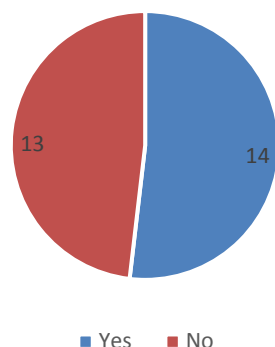
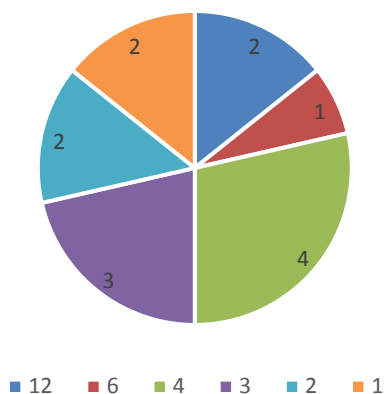


Figure 12: How many meetings have you held in the past year? 14 responses



Q7b) How long did the meetings last?

- One said between one and two hours
- 12 said between two and three hours
- One said between three and four hours

Q8) In the past year, have you conducted ward walkabouts?

- 23 (85 per cent) had conducted walkabouts, four (15 per cent) had not.
 - 11 had conducted two to four
 - Five had conducted five to ten
 - Five had conducted more than ten
 - Two gave non-specified answers
 - Six said they took up to one hour
 - Seven one to one and a half hours
 - Eight took two – three hours
 - One answered: 'Between 15 minutes and two hours'
 - One answered: 'One walkabout a total of 15 hours, another took 40 hours and the other two took about 3 hours each.'

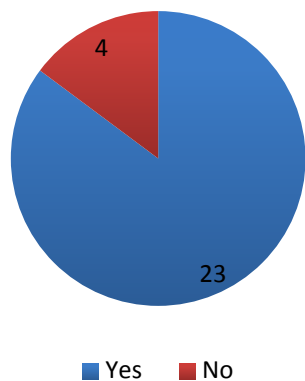


Figure 13: In the past year, how many ward walkabouts have you conducted? 23 responses

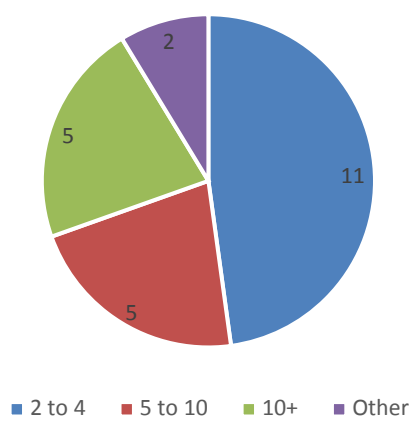
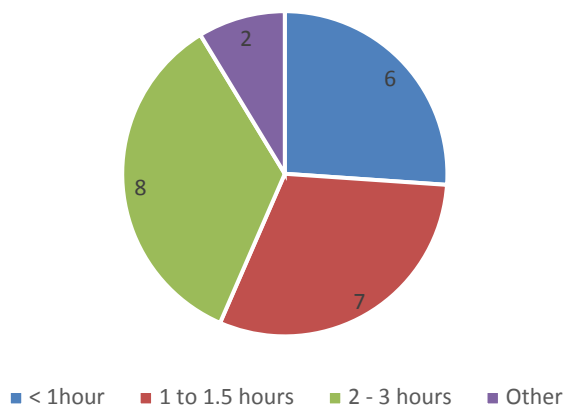


Figure 14: How long did the ward walkabouts take? 23 responses



Q9) In the past year, have you met with residents in their own homes?

27 respondents answered this question.

- 26 (96 per cent) had met with them and 24 answered the follow-up questions asking how many times and how long they had lasted
 - Six had met between one and four times
 - Four had met between six and ten times
 - Four had met between 12 and 14 times
 - Three had met between 15 and 25 times

- Five had met at least 30 times
- Two had met 'numerous times'
 - Five said their meetings lasted less than one hour
 - 11 lasted one hour
 - Seven lasted 1 ½ to two hours
 - One met for 'as long as necessary'

Figure 15: In the past year, how many times have you met with residents in their own home? 24 responses

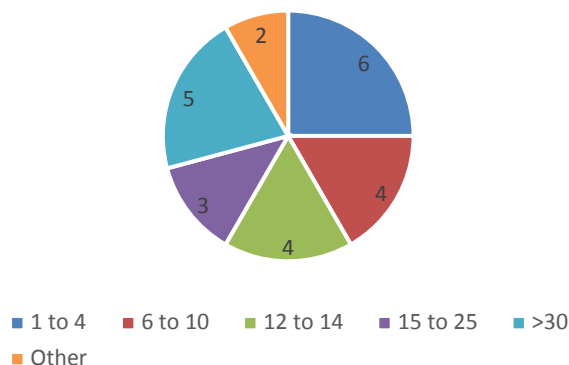
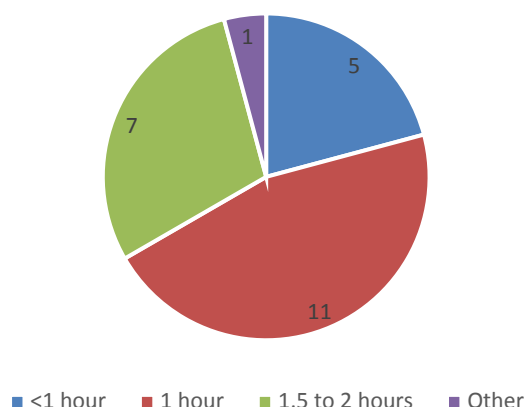


Figure 16: How long did the meeting last? 24 responses

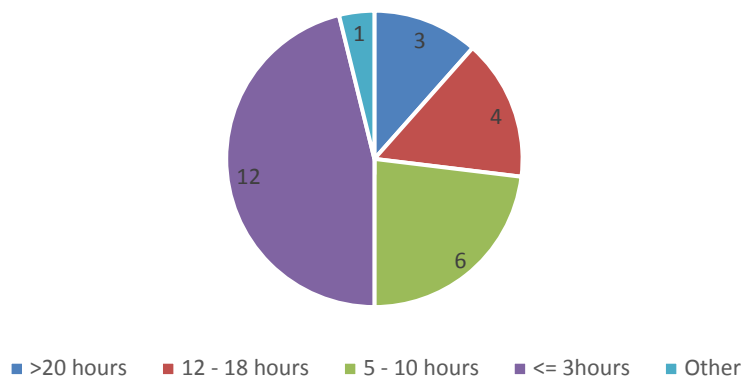


Q10) How much time on average per week do you spend on other council business, such as attending Town and Parish Council meetings, Outside Bodies, where you are appointed to represent the Borough Council or LAP meetings in your capacity as a Borough Councillor?

26 respondents answered this question.

- Three spent more than 20 hours
- Four spent between 12 and 18 hours
- Six spent five to ten hours
- 12 spent up to three hours
- One spent 'as much time as possible'.

Figure 17: How much time on average per week do you spend on other council business, such as attending Town and Parish Council meetings, Outside Bodies, where you are appointed to represent the Borough Council or LAP meetings as a councillor? 26 responses

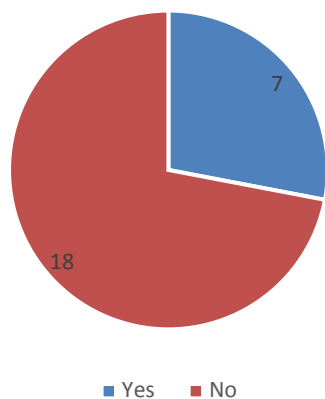


Q11) Do you use social media to engage with your constituents? If so, how much extra time does this take per week?

25 respondents answered this question.

- Seven respondents (28 per cent) said they did use social media
 - Three said they spent around two – three hours
 - Two said they spent one hour
 - Two gave non-time specific responses.
- 18 (72 per cent) said they did not use social media.

Figure 18: Do you use social media to engage with your constituents? 25 responses



Q12) If there is any additional information that you would like to add that you feel may be useful, please enter it here.

The following comments were made, included word for word as they were submitted:

I think these questions are hard to answer because the work levels are very variable with lots of peaks and troughs. Would it be useful to ask a sample of Councillors to keep a simple calendar for a month or two where they could record the type of work they do, the time taken and note it on the relevant day?

work load varies sometimes I feel I'm doing a full time job and couldn't do the work if I was working full time. Other times the work is less demanding but I'm always on duty.

The IT system for diary keeping needs to be updated for officers to populate our phone diary for those who are County members as well

In addition to attending committee meetings as a Vice Chair, I attend pre meeting briefings with officers of each group.

I go to every Residents Meeting, also LAP. I meet with Aspire Residents whenever.

As an elected member of NBC, I have always put my residents first. It is more important to be in constant touch with them and help to make their environment a better place to live in. After all, that is why I have been elected by my residents.

It is hard to specify time spent as Councillors. Your time is never your own. I look at it as full time work.

I am Vice Chair of a Community Centre, on the Committee of Residents also, attend LAP meetings and other forums.

In some past years, we have done a public meeting. I also attend many meetings with officers, averaging 1 per week, and neither have I included in the above the Full Council meetings and the group meetings. These also usually require much preparation. Also, much time reading cabinet papers (2+ hours per month).

At election time, we canvass the whole ward an average of 1 and a half hours per night to meet with residents, community centre management 6 times a year. 9 hours.

As my ward is rural and spread over a larger area than say, in the urban areas, more time is required to create time to meet with residents or be available for them outside planning surgeries, etc.. The workload can be quiet, but on the whole is very busy. I certainly would struggle to meet the demands of the Borough Councillor if this was not shared with fellow councillors in my ward, thus depriving residents of local service representation and advice.

I also spend on average 15 hours per month working in or with the community, sitting on resident's association committee, school governor, community centre management committee.