

Alnwick-Haldimand Township

2026 Municipal Election

Community Candidate Questionnaire

Prepared by AHRPA

Purpose

This questionnaire has been developed to provide residents of Alnwick-Haldimand Township with an opportunity to better understand the views, priorities and leadership approach of each municipal candidate.

Every candidate has been asked the same questions and will have the same opportunity to respond. Responses will be published as submitted (subject only to formatting and the 2,000-character limit per question) to help residents make informed decisions at the ballot box.

Candidate Information

Name	Cathie Ritchie
Office Sought	Councillor
Email	cathieritchie@live.com
Website / Facebook (optional)	Vote Cathie Ritchie Counsellor Alnwick/Haldimand Township

Section 1 – About You

1. Why are you running for municipal office?

What motivated you to seek election, and what do you hope to accomplish if elected?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I was motivated to run for councillor of Alnwick/Halimand because I believe in the democratic process.

Beyond that, I believe the people in office should be working for the whole township. The policies, procedures and by-laws; made by council by a majority vote, should be adhered to.

I would like to be instrumental in the council members being more transparent, fiscally responsible, and following procedures that they themselves have produced; or been mandated to do by higher tier governments.

When I was on council we had an open comment section at the end of meetings. I would like this to be reintroduced. Even if the public is given a time line for thier comments.

2. What experience has prepared you for this role?

Describe the skills, education, professional experience, volunteer work or community involvement that you believe will help you serve residents effectively.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

My husband and I moved to this township twenty-four plus years ago. I was a member of council from 2006 to 2020. Over the years I have continued my education. I got my hairdressing licence in my early twenties. In my forties I graduated on the Deans list from the Paralegal program at Loyalist College. I believe this program prepared me for the duties expected of a councillor. I returned to school in my fifties and became a PSW. I also, completed courses at Trent University in psychology, sociology and anthropology. I helped to run my husband's business both as the secretary and a labourer. We have built or renovated seven of our homes. I have prepared invoices, processed contributions to WSIB, CPP and taxes. I have volunteered. Harwood Community hall, Bewdley refereeing chief, coach of both indoor and outdoor Cobourg minor soccer, Plainville public school parents committee, Northumberland County accessibility committee, Well on council I was a member of the Heritage committee, Horticultural Society, Cemetery board, Canada day parade committee, Heritage committee and the original ATV committee. I was also; involved as a council member, with the Trent conservation coalition source protection committee, along side the CEO of that time.

3. What are your top three priorities?

Please identify the three most important issues you would focus on during your first term and explain why.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

TRANSPARENCY

Transparency an integral part of being on Municipal Council. Although; municipal government is the lowest tier, it is also closest to the ground roots... THE PEOPLE.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The rising cost of our taxes year after year needs to come to an end. The budget needs to be gone over with a fine tooth comb. I do not like to waste money, mine or other peoples.

ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility isn't just about putting up ramps for easy access. Our township is made up of almost fifty percent of people over fifty. Twenty-six percent of that fifty are over sixty-five. Not everyone understands technology. We need a second way to communicate what is happening in our lake to lake community. The first thing I would like to have changed is the voice recordings on staffs phone numbers. I believe it would help if staffs voice recordings changed to something a little more customer service oriented.

Section 2 – Transparency, Governance & Public Trust

4. Restoring Public Confidence / Engagement

Many residents have expressed a desire for greater openness, accountability and public engagement. What specific actions would you take to improve transparency and rebuild public trust in Township government?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

The council is made up of five individuals. It takes three of those individuals to vote yes on any given motion. However; I believe the general public should be able to ask and receive answers at every council meeting. I believe all public inquiries should be delt with in a speedy fashion and respectfully. I believe that all offers to volunteer should be received respectfully. The need for volunteers is high. Unless there is a legal reason to deny a person from volunteering, they should be treated with respect and dignity. I applaud all the hard work the townships volunteers do.

5. Council Meeting Accessibility

Would you support returning regular Council meetings to evening hours to improve accessibility for working residents, families and business owners? Why or why not?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I would support returning regular Council meetings to some evening hours. Not all of our community works days. To allow for all to be able to participate in a council meeting, it would make sense to me to have some evening and some day-time meetings. However; this being said we would have to change staff hours, to accomodate a evening meeting, either giving them time off in the day or paying them overtime. The overtime would not be as fiscally responsible in my opinion.

6. Closed (In-Camera) Meetings

Ontario law permits Council to meet in closed session only under specific circumstances. What principles would guide your decision to move a matter into an in-camera meeting, and how would you ensure those meetings are used only when necessary?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

ra. Closed discussions are only permitted by the Municipal Act 2001 when the discussion is about:

- a personal matter of an identifiable individual
- labour relations
- security of property
- litigation
- on going negotiations

If none of the above mentioned reasons are applicable, I would strongly object and ask for a recorded vote to go into a in-camera session.

7. Council Culture

Healthy councils rely on respectful discussion and differing viewpoints. How would you contribute to a culture of collaboration, respectful debate and professional conduct around the Council table?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

By being respectful of other peoples opinions. I am able to accept that other people have their own views that don't necessarily match my own. I am able to listen and and realize that what other people say could be relevant to the whole picture.

Section 3 – Financial Responsibility

8. Financial Stewardship/Efficiency

Property taxes continue to rise while municipalities face growing infrastructure demands. How would you balance maintaining essential services, investing in infrastructure and keeping property taxes affordable?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

First off, I'm not sure property taxes are affordable now. We need to fine tooth our expensives; check for overlaps, ensure we are up to date on and apply for Provincial and Federal grants, and set priorities.

9. Independent Financial Accountability

Public confidence in municipal finances is essential to good governance. If elected, would you support commissioning an independent external financial review—or, where justified, a forensic audit—of the Township's finances to provide residents with an objective assessment of the municipality's financial position and financial practices? Why or why not?

Would you commit to implementing appropriate recommendations arising from the review, whether they identify strengths, weaknesses or opportunities for improvement?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Absolutely. This would give the new council information to implement change.

10. Infrastructure Priorities

Roads, bridges, water treatment facilities, libraries, recreation facilities, municipal buildings and local halls (i.e. – Fenella) and other infrastructure all compete for limited funding. How would you prioritize infrastructure investments over the next four years?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I believe with out roads and bridges we are stranded. With out clean water people get ill. That leads to a snowball effect, where people need medical attention, emergency services and homecare. Well libraries, recreational facilities, municipal buildings and local halls are very important; they are not essential services. I believe these very important historic structures need to be maintained; but not neccessarily improved.

Section 4 – Growth & Economic Development

11. Responsible Growth

What does responsible growth look like for Alnwick-Haldimand Township over the next decade?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Responsible growth in Alnwick/Haldimand would be to consentrate growth around villages and hamlets. But; it would also allow growth in rural areas that that could meet all conditions, such as setbacks, municipal roads, not being on the Oakridges Moraine. The Oakridges Moraine is a long ridge of hills, forest and wetlands that is a natural water filter. Responssible growth would also include allowing for three residential units on residential lots as Ontario provincial legislation (bill 23) allows. (One primary and two secondary) Alnwick/Haldimand presently allows two.

12. Supporting Business & Agriculture

How would you support local businesses, agriculture, tourism and economic development while preserving the Township's rural character?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

In 2025 Alnwick/Haldimand had 41 industrial properties, 61 commercial properties, 3656 residential properties and 996 farm properties. (taken from Alnwick/Haldimand web-site) I strongly believe in and support buy local. I was raised to believe buy Canadian. My father ingrained in me the opinion that if you stop buying Canadian; where will our children and grandchildren work.

13. Housing

What role should the Township play in encouraging appropriate housing opportunities for seniors, young families and first-time homebuyers?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I believe this question was answered in question 11, responsible growth.

Section 5 – Community Services & Quality of Life

14. Recreation & Community Facilities

What improvements would you like to see in Township parks, recreation facilities, trails, libraries and community spaces?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

It is very important for people to be able to get outside and soak up the fresh air and sun. It is also very important for people of all ages to enjoy walking, sports, and social groups. Our community spaces need to be maintained to be safe and accessible for all. There has been a lot of volunteer hours involved in maintaining these spaces. I would like to see more volunteers welcomed.

15. Volunteers & Community Organizations

Volunteers contribute significantly to our community. How can Council better support local volunteers, service clubs and community organizations?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

Council should be unbiased when supporting our organizations made up of mostly volunteers. In essence our service clubs and community organizations are volunteers. If a person asks to volunteer their request should be assessed professionally; and unless legally cannot be accepted, we should welcome them.

16. Healthcare Recruitment

Access to family physicians and other healthcare professionals remains a challenge across Ontario. What role, if any, should the Township play in attracting healthcare professionals and supporting local healthcare initiatives?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I do not believe that this burden should be put on Municipalities.
I believe it should be the responsibility of the provincial and federal governments.

Section 6 – Communication & Leadership

17. Communication

If elected, how will residents hear from you between elections? Please describe how you intend to communicate regularly with the community.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

My family has always had an open door policy. I am willing to answer concerns of the residents in a timely fashion. I can be reached at 905-396-2209 or cathieritchie@live.com

18. Listening to Residents

Describe a time when listening to another perspective changed your opinion or improved a decision.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I tend to research topics before I discuss them, however; there have been times that speaking to others has opened up knowledge that I have missed. Especially since I have been on the campaign trail.

19. Difficult Decisions

Tell residents about one difficult decision you expect Council will face during the next four years and how you would approach it.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

The most difficult decision in my opinion will be the budget.

I will approach it methodically. (doing something in a very ordered, carefully, and systematic way) I will be dedicated to working with other council members and senior staff to create a budget that will have sustainability.

20. Working with Others

How would you work with fellow councillors whose opinions differ significantly from your own?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I believe that everyone opinion matters; by listening and ingaging in civil conversations, we can educate ourselves. Working together as a council will better the lives of our community.

21. Measuring Success

At the end of your term, what accomplishments would you hope residents use to judge your performance?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I hope that residents will aggree that I worked hard as a councillor to represent the whole of Alnwick/Haldimand township. That I helped to make the township of Alnwick/Haldimand a better place to live; with a transparent, ethical, communicative council, that listened to the people. worked for the people,

22. Why Should Residents Vote for You?

In 250 words or less, tell residents why you are the best person to represent them.

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I am dependable, educated, and have experience on council. I have not liked to ask for help in my life time, but have learned that sometimes it is neccessary.

Optional Closing Statement

Is there anything else you would like residents to know that was not covered in this questionnaire?

Maximum 2,000 characters.

I am not afraid to advocate for others. I try to do good deeds when I'm out and about in hopes that they will be passed on. I know when and how to step back from a volitile situation.

Submission Guidelines

- Responses exceeding the 2,000-character limit per question may be truncated. All candidates who submit responses by the deadline will be posted on the AHRPA website.
- Responses will be published without endorsement or editorial comment.