

Hi, I am Michael Gadd and I am standing as an Independent candidate for the Heathfield North Ward, in the local elections to be held in May this year.

My working career has been in the food production sector, locally, nationally and in Europe, with responsibility for sales, marketing and product development.



I was a member of the Local Authority Catering Association and my work in the food service sector included School Meals, Wholesale provisioning and the Hospitality Sector.

Within the community I help run Broad Oak Junior and Senior Table Tennis Clubs and I have worked with Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council and Horam Village Hall on projects to install outdoor Table Tennis tables in their community spaces offering free coaching session in the summer months.

Over the forty plus years that I have lived in Heathfield ... I have seen it grow from a small market town set in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty ... into a much larger town with new housing developments. I have also become aware of the local concerns about increased traffic, shortages of doctors, the loss of Broad Oak School, the loss of green fields in the AONB. It is these worries and concerns which have prompted me to build a web page focusing on making planning information for the Wealden District available to all.

My journey into local politics started in 2015 through my interest in planning and currently through my website I have regular contact with Wealden councillors and residents. In 2019 I participated in the Wealden District Local Plan Examination and spoke about the High Weald ANOB and Housing. In 2022 I have attended several Planning Appeals and conveyed resident's views, and regularly attend HWPC Planning meeting as a resident.

I now feel it is time for me to take the next step ... into a Wealden District Councillor role. As an Independent I will not be associated to any political party, and I will represent all residents in equal measure. I believe that local government should put local issues first and foremost, while working within guidelines handed down from County and National Government ... and challenging those guidelines if they are considered to be detrimental to residents and the electors.

I am proud to live in such a vibrant and diverse rural community, and I am committed to ensuring that everyone in Heathfield has a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. I believe life and work experience, will give me the vision, and dedication to make a positive difference in our community, and I would be honoured to have your support on election day.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you to build a brighter future for. [Heathfield and its Residents](#)

Together we can make a difference. it just needs your vote to make it happen.



The field pictured above is set in the High Weald AONB close to Heathfield and was used for decades by local people for variety of well-being pursuits. I helped fight a long and hard campaign to keep it green and eventually obtain an Asset of Community Value status for the field which has now been returned to farming use.

My top six priorities will be,

- 1. As Independent I will maintain pressure within Wealden District Council to deliver and implement the new Local Plan as soon as possible, and that it represents and reflects the views and wishes of residents:**
Currently Wealden District Council's key decision-making references used for evaluating and deciding upon applications for housing developments are significantly out of date.

The crucially important Wealden Local Plan was last approved in 1998 and their proposed new plan, which had taken several years to produce, was withdrawn after the Government Inspector rejection. The Wealden Core Strategy 2013 – 2027 which underpins the Local Plan is old and arguably no longer represents current needs.

What should be solid indisputable references and data have been easily side-lined and undermined by developers intent on getting planning approval, and the Council has no means to dispute housing numbers handed down by the UK Government which have been increasing dramatically from 450 to over 1200 across Wealden.

Why does this matter? Developers are keen to build on green fields which means lower costs / higher profits and that means the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty which surrounds Heathfield and has the highest level of landscape protection has been seriously eroded with housing developments some running into hundreds of homes. I have been communicating regularly with our MP since 2016 regarding housing numbers in Wealden.
- 2. As an Independent I will push to further enhance the transparency of Wealden District Council in line with residents' expectations:**
Some of the councils projects are not as visible to local people as they should be, and I believe Heathfield and Wealden residents deserve to know what their money is being spent on.
- 3. As an Independent I will continually, position and reflect to the Council that planning policies should first and foremost be based on local needs:**
Figures from East Sussex County Council show that in Wealden most if not all new dwellings are built for people coming from outside the Wealden District and are not fulfilling the local need for smaller and affordable properties.
- 4. As Independent I will continually represent the views of Heathfield people to the Council and be ready willing and able to communicate them 'upwards' through the different layers of Parish, District and the National political system:**
As an Independent District Councillor, I will be free and able to represent your views and to challenge what you tell me goes against what you feel is right for Heathfield.
- 5. As an Independent I will challenge, anything that is detrimental to the natural and built environment of Wealden and the High Weald Area of Natural Beauty and does not represent the views of its residents:**
I have been very much aware for many years of the deep concerns in Heathfield ... that the Council has been effectively devaluing the status of the green fields and ancient woodlands of the High Weald by allowing many housing developments nearly all of which have been on 'green field sites' in the AONB.
- 6. As an Independent I will strengthen community engagement: I believe that the best way to serve our community is to listen to our residents. I will work to strengthen community engagement by creating more opportunities for residents to provide feedback, share ideas, and participate in decision making processes.**

Working together we can make a difference to Heathfield ... please vote for me!

Michael Gadd your Independent Candidate for Heathfield North

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Printed by Scantech Group 17 Burgess Road, Ivyhouse Lane Hastings East Sussex TN35

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