



ABOUT US

You're Not a Floating Voter – You're An Independent Voter

The Independent Network (IN) is a non-profit organisation that provides support to candidates who are not members of political parties. Independent candidates do not have access to a large national party structure with its human and financial resources. The Independent Network was formed to attend to this inequality and will encourage the electorate to acknowledge the success and influence independents are having in Parliament and in local government.

98.5% of the population are not members of a political party, yet there are only two directly elected independent MPs – Dai Davies and Dr Richard Taylor MP. While the vast majority of the electorate remains interested in national and local issues, most people in the UK feel that they do not have a say in how the country is run.

This public frustration and disillusionment with career politicians and party politics demonstrates an urgent need for independent candidates elected to public office.

Members of the public who support non-partisan politics are encouraged to support the efforts of the IN to get more independent politicians elected to public office.

The IN is not a political party and does not impose any political views on supporters or candidates. However, the IN does insist that all affiliates are non-racist and non-discriminatory and have no affiliation with any group or party that embodies beliefs contradictory to these principles.

Supporters and endorsed candidates are asked to agree to the Bell Principles - a code of conduct for elected representatives formulated by Martin Bell OBE and the Independent Network.

We aim to create a sense of cohesion and identity for Independent candidates. We hope to establish national credibility for its affiliates, enabling the electorate to vote Independent with greater confidence that an Independent vote is a vote for a more representative government at all levels.

THE BELL PRINCIPLES

The Bell Principles are the first code of conduct for elected representatives - they demand that politicians behave to the highest of standards. The Independent Network asks that all endorsed candidates and supporters agree to these principles. They were first formulated by the former independent MP Martin Bell and were presented to the IN at a strategy meeting in September 2009. They were

unanimously adopted by supporters of the IN and were later edited by members of the IN Executive.

They are seen as a living document and will be continuously edited to reflect the changing world we live in. If you have any comments regarding the Bell Principles, please send them to: secretariat@independentnetwork.org.uk

THE BELL PRINCIPLES

We will

abide wholeheartedly by the spirit and letter of the Seven Principles of Public Life set out by Lord Nolan in 1995: *selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership,*

be guided by considered evidence, our real world experience and expertise, our constituencies and our consciences

be free from the control of any political party, pressure group or whip,

be non-discriminatory, ethical and committed to pluralism,

make decisions transparently and openly at every stage and level of the political process,

enabling people to see how decisions are made and the evidence on which they are based,

listen, consulting our communities constantly and innovatively,

treat political opponents with courtesy and respect, challenging them when we believe they are wrong, and agreeing with them when we believe they are right,

resist abuses of power and patronage and promote democracy at every level,

work with other elected independents as a Group with a chosen spokesperson,

claim expenses, salaries and compensation openly so the public can judge the value for money of our activities.