**INTRODUCTION**

We need your help to celebrate the acts and deeds of women in Cumbria who have gone above and beyond to really make a notable difference where they, or you, live.

Whether that has been achieved through fund raising for worthy causes, campaigning to raise the profile of a cause or injustice, excelling in sport or business, enhancing existing schemes or facilities, or creating a sense of community to improve the quality of life for others and make Cumbria a better place to live, we want to hear about it so we can recognise their efforts and celebrate their achievements at the Cumbria Woman of the Year Awards Luncheon.

Please take a little time to complete a nomination form about that special lady in your community but before you do, please take a look at the guidance to help you on your way.

**NOMINATION CRITERIA**

* Must be female
* Must be 16 years of age or older
* Must live in Cumbria

**HELPFUL TIPS**

When completing your nomination form ask yourself the following questions:

* How were things before they began?
* How are they now?
* What makes them different from others doing the same thing?

And if you are looking for inspiration when crafting your nomination, consider the examples provided below, or click on the link to go to our [Past Winners - Cumbria women of the year](http://www.cumbriawomenoftheyear.co.uk/winners/past-winners/) page.

**EXAMPLES:**

In addition to perusing the stories of past winners, we have provided some examples that capture the essence of a successful nomination. We recommend keeping the word count to 250 words, which amounts to a couple of paragraphs, but have provided an extra box on the nomination form for additional information should you run out of space.

**EXAMPLE 1**

She has devoted most of her spare time to running a social club for elderly people with learning difficulties. She says such people are sadly neglected in society and, although she is in full time employment in a Tesco store, she runs this club with two helpers, a small budget and a lot of hard graft. Over the past five years, more than 200 people have benefited from the facilities, as well as their carers who have been given valuable respite from their responsibilities. **(84 words)**

*This nominee is helping others voluntarily and in doing so has helped and made life better for many others, It’s clear that she is the key person getting the club going and the nomination also makes clear the number of people who have benefited from her work.*

**EXAMPLE 2**

She lived on an estate with high numbers of single mothers and disaffected young people but, instead of moaning about the youth of today, she started to listen to them and, as a result, started a club with sporting activities and facilities for mothers and their children. This is now used by 500 local teenagers. She had to work hard to gain the support of police and other agencies but was determined to succeed. Now, a once crime-ridden unpopular estate, is thriving with a real sense of purpose and achievement and crime rates have plummeted. **(95 words)**

*This nominee has taken the initiative to do something to help her community. She has identified a need and started something from scratch to make things better for others and she has been very successful.*

**EXAMPLE 3**

For over 40 years she has been a prolific fundraiser in the community. Since 1970 she has stood outside the local supermarket every Saturday in all weathers rattling her tin for good causes. During this time she has raised around £40,000 for the local hospice and the Old Rectory Club for disabled people. On retirement in 1990, she began to organise bingo nights three times a week at three different village halls and, also arranges a monthly dance. These activities have brought the community together and have helped to raise over £15,000 for several local charities. **(96 Words)**

*This nominee has given her time and effort over decades and in doing so has both supported local causes and helped to support the community.*

**EXAMPLE 4**

She has been the under 16s football team coach for 15 years. During the season she gives up every Tuesday evening for training and every Sunday for matches against other local teams. It is a testament to her success as a coach that there are now enough junior members for two boys’ and a girls’ team. She has undertaken all manner of tasks to support the club, from mowing the pitch to acting as club secretary. She organized several fundraising tournaments to raise £4,000 towards renovation of the football pitch and clubhouse, a facility now used by the whole community for village events. **(103 words)**

*This nomination makes clear that the nominee has given up a lot of time to local children and that, by being willing to turn her hand to anything, she has been the driving force behind the club’s success.*

**EXAMPLE 5**

She found that the charity was wasting over a £1m a year on time-consuming inefficient administration and had no effective PR. She altered procedures, reduced staff and adopted a ‘can do’ approach by putting the people the organisation was supposed to be helping at the top of her priority list, rather than at the bottom. **(55 Words)**

*This is an example of a nominee who has fundamentally changed an organisation for the better and whose leadership has made sure that that charity focused on the right things.*