

Cllr Chris Whitehouse KSG

Political Consultant

Chris has worked in politics for over 30 years and now runs his own public affairs agency, The Whitehouse Consultancy. He's a Trustee of the Right to Life Charitable Trust, a columnist with Catholic newspaper, The Universe, Secretary to the Catholic Legislators' Network, a county councillor on the Isle of Wight, and is a trained PADI Rescue Diver.



What does a day in your life entail?

I spend half the week in and around Westminster, and half the week on the beautiful Isle of Wight. When in London, I'm either lobbying on behalf of clients (charities, companies, campaign groups etc) or making mischief either through the Catholic Legislators' Network or my very controversial weekly column in the Catholic press.

What is most rewarding about your job; what makes it all worthwhile?

Having recently moved to become Chairman of business instead of Managing Director, I have more freedom to indulge my own passions in the world of politics: driving forward campaigns against abortion and euthanasia, ensuring that Catholic MPs and Peers keep in touch with each other despite Party differences, and raising controversial issues through my articles in the Catholic press and on Conservative Home website. The most rewarding aspects are when a major campaign comes to fruition, particularly for charity clients.

How did you get to where you are today?

As a young child in the 1960s, I was always appalled by the concept of abortion. Campaigning for the right to life has been a consistent theme in my life, and back in 1983 I was asked to head to Westminster to set up and run the All-Party Parliamentary Pro-life Group which remains today the main forum for discussion and vehicle for action on pro-life issues in the Palace of Westminster. After 20 years working for the Pro-life Group, I needed to get a proper job to earn a living to provide for my wife and four children, but frankly nobody would employ me, so I had to set up my own business. More by accident than by design it has grown steadily ever since. I now employ over 20 people: I always try and find those who are the best, with wide experience in the world of politics, from all political parties and from both the United Kingdom and the institutions of the European Union.

How does your faith link with what you do?

My faith is me. I fail to stick to its teachings hundreds of times every day, but every day I can get up, say a couple of Hail Mary's and try to start again. It drives my work for the Catholic Legislators' Network and my writings in the Catholic media. But it also helps shape the culture of my business. Although the Whitehouse Consultancy employs people of all different faiths and none, I always wanted it to be an inclusive, welcoming, nurturing and empowering place to work. It has maintained that ethos.

Do you think faith and public life/politics are compatible?

Catholics are not just invited by our Church's teachings to become involved in public life, it is positively demanded of us. We have an absolute duty to engage with politics to bring about a better world for the Common Good. I'm absolutely confident that we will be expected to account for how we lived our lives and in doing so how we sought to treat our neighbours as ourselves and to champion the interests of the marginalised in society. I will have many things to answer for, but one of them won't be that I ever gave up trying to change the world!

What is the biggest misconception that people often have about your work?

The biggest misconceptions are that all politicians are in it for themselves and all lobbyists are merely out to buy influence. Many Catholic politicians give their public service because they feel driven to right injustices and to put their faith into practice. And many of my lobbying campaigns have really changed the lives of some of the weakest and most vulnerable in our society.