He has mid-aged women go up to him for a photo, some displaying the enthusiasm of a schoolgirl crush.

It’s not hard to see why. Opposition candidate Vincent Wijeysingha – a star candidate of the Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) in last year’s General Election (GE) – is eloquent, nattily dressed and armed with a doctorate in social work.

But the 42-year-old laughed and demurred that he is no auntie killer.

What he does concede is that he has become “more recognisable” since the GE.

He said Singaporeans from all walks of life have come up to him to say hi or pour out their problems to him.

This usually happens during walkabouts in the four group representative constituencies (GRC) that the SDP contested in the GE – Holland-Bukit Timah, Sembawang, Bukit Panjang, Yuhua – and now Tanjong Pagar group GRC.

Said Dr Wijeysingha: “Some contact me through e-mail, some even call up the party office (to speak to me).”

It helps that he has a good listening ear, but he modestly blushed at the compliment.

The public encounters have become less frequent since the beginning of the year.

He said people have got used to who he is and, with the election fever over, “feel no need to come up to him and shake his hand or pose for a photo”.

It was 7pm last Friday when The New Paper met him at a cafe in Bishan.

He was about to tuck into a chicken pie and a cup of tea.

“Can I eat first? I haven’t had lunch,” he said.

He had just finished back-to-back classes at SIM University, where he has been teaching social work since November.

He stepped down as executive director of local non-government organisation Transient Workers Count Too (TWC2). It was a post he held since June 2010.

He said: “I enjoy teaching. I like social work; it’s my profession.

“It’s nice to be with social workers. It’s nice to be generating the knowledge that they need to be the next generation of social workers.”

After the GE, he realised that it would be “difficult” juggling two “high-profile” roles as executive director of TWC2 and politician.

“So, I kind of decided that after the elections that I would look for something else, something that involved less time and is less high profile,” he said. “(Now) no one comes to me for a quote, unlike in TWC2.”

Last August, Dr Wijeysingha was promoted to treasurer in the SDP.

He was in the party’s central executive committee as an assistant treasurer before he contested in the GE as part of a four-member team in the Holland-Bukit Timah GRC.

These days, he spends his weekends doing walkabouts and his weekdays on political party work such as policy meetings and drafting press releases, leaving him little time for leisure.

“I don’t go to the movies as much as I used to. I prefer watching DVDs because you can hit the pause button, make a cup of Milo and pick up from where you stopped,” he said.

He has recently read Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris and a mystical poem, The Masnavi, by Sufi poet Rumi.

He confessed he does not often read fiction but found The Help by Kathryn Stockett “clever, well-written and easy to read”.

His sister, Ms Carmen Wijeysingha, a teacher, told The New Paper that since Dr Wijeysingha came back from England in 2009, it has been an unspoken rule that they meet at their parent’s home for dinner every Sunday.

His father, Mr Eugene Wijeysingha, is a former headmaster of Raffles Institution.

“But since his foray into politics, these visits are not as frequent due to his busy schedule,” said Ms Wijeysingha, 49. “However, Vincent never fails to spend time with the family on events like birthdays, anniversaries, Easter, Christmas and the New Year.”

She added: “My perspective on Vincent has not changed. I see the same vigour, the same energy and the same determination that I did in him many years ago whenever he set his mind on achieving something.

“I don’t see Vincent as a public figure; I think he’s more of an additional voice for each and every person in Singapore.”

– Teacher Carmen Wijeysingha on her brother

SDP’s Vincent Wijeysingha keeps lower profile but party work continues