

Who makes these decisions!

Before becoming a Parish Councillor for Kidlington I had lived in various parts of the village for around 35 years, raised three children, and run my own businesses for much of that time. At this point I would love to be able to say, that at my heart I am a well-meaning philanthropist and I really enjoy giving for the pleasure, that is not strictly true. I had, like most people I suspect, used Kidlington as a safe place to be, to come home to, for the children to go to clubs, to meet people, but beyond my personal network I hadn't actively engaged with the community. The usual routine; come home from work, cook dinner, deliver the children to where they need to be, collect, close the door. Having spoken to many many people I know this is familiar for those of us that are busy getting on with our lives.

When I sold my business, I effectively made myself unemployed, and spent plenty of time dwelling on how I should use my time. My core skills are based around strategy, operations and logistics and I began to find myself becoming irritated by many things that I felt were out of my control, or I didn't understand how these seemingly illogical decisions were made.

I decided I needed to understand more, and who was responsible, but how could I complain about a system I didn't take an active role in. I applied to join the Parish Council as a Co-opted member, initially I wanted to understand, who made decision, how and why, but gradually over time I began to realize that the Parish Council is a small part in a much larger system.

Councillors generally serve a four year fixed term and 2023 was election year. I had to decide whether to stand to be elected, this was a big decision for someone who has generally been quite private, did I want to put myself out there? What would that mean for my family and friendships?

In May 2023 I was elected to KPC and to Cherwell District Council for Kidlington West. I thoroughly enjoy being involved in both Councils, meeting new people who have often quite differing views to my own, but to me that is healthy democracy. And yes, there is an element of giving back to the community that has protected me and my family, but mostly I like to question decisions made to ensure that they are robust and not just the 'status quo'.

I get a lot of satisfaction from talking to people about everyday life, what is happening, or likely to happen in the community, much of the work we do is unseen until a project like the play parks or Coronation Garden is completed, but behind the scenes I am working away on various projects which will impact the community like the developments coming to the area, community engagement, how we communicate, what is a better way to deal with childhood obesity locally, is our sports provision as inclusive as it should be, and many other things, which I thoroughly enjoy.

If this has given you any ideas or questions, or raised something you would like to talk through, please do let me know your thoughts! If you have managed to make it through my story and are thinking about getting involved, please do feel free to contact me via email (details below) to arrange an informal chat, we currently have two vacancies for Councillors and it would be great to hear from people across the village community.

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