

I've been part of the St Michael's team since 2018, and have been most active campaigning in the City Council Election, European Election and General Election. I must've knocked on every door in the Ward and canvassed every Lib Dem supporter. And, if I'm selected as candidate for the Ward, I will happily spend next spring doing that again, several times over if necessary. I've found the most rewarding and useful thing about canvassing is not that it is an opportunity to sway undecided voters, but as a way of finding out what people in the area want done, what problems they want solved, and then, by putting this stuff in campaign literature and putting forward solutions, *that* is the way to sway the undecided. It is not so much a listening exercise as a writing down and nicking their ideas exercise. That is, I think, the key to winning the seat; by making it clear that the LibDems are the party that gets stuff done and that as the LibDem candidate I will be - and will continue to be outside of election time - the most available to them when they have an issue and the one best placed to get their problem addressed by the City Council.

The main thing that has struck me about St Michael's is that it is possibly the city's most diverse Ward. You have houses ranging from listed buildings to some rundown flats, like Brooks Court off St George's Street. Plus, of course, lots of retirement flats and housing estates. Or Milland Road, which has weird modern buildings on one side of the street and former council houses on the other. So, as a candidate for the area, I think the challenge is to be someone who speaks for all classes and ages, and not to be seen as part of any establishment.

Politics. I've been a member of the LibDems since 2016. I used to be a member of the Labour Party; I even stood as one of their candidates in the 2016 election. However, given that politically I was always to the right of the Labour Party, the progressive 'democratic socialist' wing, I departed quite emphatically in response to the advent of Jeremy Corbyn's leadership and Labour's equivocation on Brexit. I joined the LibDems because they were - and remain - the only party which is grounded in reality, of taking a pragmatic, best-practice approach, and not pretending that difficult decisions have easy solutions. They are also the party of my main political belief, which is that the best way to run a society is one in which equality and personal freedom are the guiding principles. It is, I think, no coincidence that the happiest and most successful societies are the ones with the least inequality in terms of wealth and opportunity. The LibDems are, I feel, the only party seeking to reduce social divisions rather than seeking to exacerbate and exploit them.

However, I firmly believe that political ideology shouldn't really have much of a place in local politics. Wanting an efficient, well-run city shouldn't be a left-right-or-centre issue. Wanting council revenues to be well spent shouldn't be a political issue. Having a clean environment and safe roads and decent housing shouldn't be a political issue. These are all areas where the best thing to do is just to follow best practice elsewhere, elsewhere in the UK and elsewhere in Europe. If something works, do it. For instance, the other day I read about York building zero-carbon houses and car-free neighbourhoods, and I'm left wondering why we don't do things like that. Not particularly ambitious or expensive things, just... things which are looking to the future.

Because I see the role of a City Councillor as one of helping make Winchester ready for the future. Not just ready, but at the forefront of what can be achieved. The Covid thing has brought forward various changes that were going to happen anyway in terms of people's work and shopping patterns and Winchester needs to adapt. The model of building housing estates designed for people who take their kids to school by car, who shop by car, and who commute to an office by car, or get the train to London, is a model that is going to become quickly and permanently outdated. The idea of running a town centre without making it accessible to people with disabilities or who need to social distance is going to be a thing of the past. Because when Winchester is seeking to attract the businesses of the future, it is going to be competing with cities which offer cycle routes and pedestrianised shopping areas, and environmentally-friendly homes that aren't tiny boxes on identikit estates.

I see the LibDems as being the party best placed to realise a better future for Winchester. We have already made a great start in making the city more pedestrian friendly, widening pavements and so on. So, if I was elected a City Councillor, I would take that as not just an endorsement of the LibDems' approach, but a vote that we should keep pushing forward and have even greater ambitions for Winchester. I would consider the role of Councillor to be one of supporting and strengthening our position on the Council.

About myself. I'm 47, I live in Fulflood, married, with a son in The Westgate School. We moved to Winchester in 2014 to be near my in-laws and have now firmly made it our home; I'm currently in the process of arranging for my mother to move to a nearby village. I'm a freelance writer - I've done radio and TV things and now write about *Doctor Who* for a living - while my wife works in the Discovery Centre. I grew up in Taunton, Somerset and studied Maths at Southampton University; one of my first jobs was working in Winchester processing death records. I spent my twenties working in the music industry in London, and then spent a couple of years working in the NHS, as a Mental Health Act administrator at Maudsley Hospital and a medical secretary at Lewisham and Queen Elizabeth hospitals. My main 'hobby' is running; over the past six years I've run every street and footpath in Winchester and its surrounding villages and golf courses. This has, I think, given me a deep appreciation of the City, its beauty and its history, as well as a deep appreciation of quite how steep much of it is.

Jonathan Morris