

IAN SHARPLES DIGGORY

Personal Statement

Career Background

I was born in North Wales in 1947. Studied physics and mathematics at Liverpool university followed by postgraduate studies in nuclear and cosmic ray physics at the universities of London and Durham. Between 1974 and 1979 I was a research associate at Newcastle Polytechnic where I investigated environmental noise issues, such as open cast mining and road traffic noise, on behalf of various government agencies.

In 1979 I set up a technical software company and for the next 15 years was a consultant to British Gas' Engineering Research Station (ERS). When ERS closed in 1995 I joined with British Gas colleagues to form MACAW Engineering Ltd, a provider of technical consultancy services to the oil and gas industry. In 2010 MACAW became part of the ROSEN Group, the world's largest pipeline inspection company. Until December 2017 I was a Director of ROSEN(UK). With a staff of nearly 150 engineers in our Newcastle office we currently provide our services to virtually every major oil and gas operator around the world.

During my time as a Director and risk specialist I negotiated with senior management from oil companies around the globe. I remain a principal consultant with ROSEN(UK), providing advice to the Board when requested and with responsibility for advising on contract liability issues.

What might I bring to the Parish Council?

Although I have observed the various changes and difficulties faced by our community over the 37 years I have lived in West Rainton, I have had only minimal contact with community activities. Last year, in my first foray into the community, I helped develop the "Village Plan". Those meetings gave me some insight into the hidden dynamics of our community. As a consequence I published a letter in Village News about the need for a wider involvement of local residents – including myself. Having made that call I am hardly in a position to reject an offer to join the parish council!

Whilst I appreciate that the remit of the Parish Council rightly tends to focus its attentions on immediate issues, I did observe from the "Village Plan" meetings there was a lack of strategy as to where the parish will be in the next 5 -10 years and even beyond. Much of the discussions were reactive rather than proactive. Building on the Village Plan to create a Neighbourhood Plan would establish the legal foundation on which to take forward future strategies and empower the Parish Council, particularly when it comes to establishing community infrastructure that is delivered through development. I believe I have the experience and skill set to make a positive contribution in this area.

I note from recent correspondence in the minutes that the future of Jubilee Hall is high on the PC agenda, with ongoing discussions about establishing ownership and a suitable management structure (CIO?). This is clearly an opportunity to determine a long-term future for this vital community asset. Although the Hall is a focal point for community activities in the parish, I would suggest that what is actually required is a business plan to secure the long-term commercial viability of this building. Having a background in negotiation and business development I feel my services may be of some assistance here.

Can I commit the necessary time?

I undertake very little international travel these days and only work a 3 or 4 day week. I am also master of my own calendar, so allocating time to community meetings and parish council work should not be a problem.