

Julia Cherrett 1959-2020

Julia's untimely death on October 3rd has robbed Stockton of a loved and admired woman whose core values of justice and fairness permeated everything she did. Her children have written of their childhood memories of the family fridge being given away to someone who otherwise couldn't safely store their insulin. Only a couple of hours before her collapse at home she had been delivering shopping to vulnerable residents whom she'd supported all through the pandemic lockdown.

Before becoming a councillor Julia had a history of working on projects to support disadvantaged people and communities. Perhaps her proudest achievement was her involvement in setting up FRADE, helping those who had a home but needed essential furniture that they could not afford. In 2005 she was persuaded to stand for election in the newly formed ward of Bishopsgarth & Elm Tree. As always, she thought carefully about what would be involved before agreeing but once committed she worked tirelessly. Even before election day she'd successfully campaigned to have a post box on Darlington Back Lane near to Celandine Way so that residents of the new housing didn't have to rely on cars



or bikes to be able to post a letter.

In subsequent years she worked with residents of Bishopsgarth to set up the Association of Residents (BAR) and helped them to apply for funding to establish Bisby Park, giving the children of the area somewhere safe and interesting to play, many years after the estate was built.



Bisby Park

Over her 15 years as a councillor she worked with the Elm Tree Community Centre, police and businesses to improve security around Elm Tree shops and Community Centre, even going out on patrol with police to better understand the issues from their viewpoint. Dangerously fast traffic through residential streets, Anti-Social behaviour across the ward, Car parking for

Rosedale care home, requests for bus shelters on busy routes, pedestrian safety measures,



Litter Picking with David Minchella



New Bus Shelter



Surveying residents With Elliot Kennedy



Rosedale Centre Car Park

working with council officers and residents to get the best possible outcomes on major

housing plans, increased car parking bays in parts of the ward designed before car ownership was so widespread, working on democracy projects in a local primary school; just a flavour of the work she did in the ward.

Outside the ward she worked to get the street sculpture, Racing Ahead (popularly known as The Dogs), restored to a prominent site after it was discarded in a workshop following the refurbishment of the High Street. Some of us will never walk past it without thinking of Julia and her determination that a work of art shouldn't be lost to the people of the borough.



Her passion for the wellbeing of people in the borough led her to an active role in scrutinising the council's housing policy and to a role on the board of Tristar Homes. She fought to get the council to encourage the Teesside

Pension Fund to divest itself of investments in the tobacco industry. She served for many years



Checking new dropped kerbs



Testing Wheelchair routes



Planting Bulbs



Supporting local foodbank appeal

on the Home Safety Committee, spreading information and help to

make smoke alarms, falls alarms and other aids widely available to those who needed them. Always a champion for anyone with a disability of any sort, doing everything she could to make access possible, whatever the barriers.

She wanted places in Bishopsgarth and Elm Tree not just to be safe and fit for purpose, but to look pleasant too. She didn't just campaign though, she joined in with some of the work, including planting bulbs, weeding paths and doing numerous litter picks alongside residents and her fellow councillor in the ward.

Within Stockton Lib Dems Julia joined energetically in campaign planning for elections to Borough Council, Parliament, Tees Valley Mayor and the European Parliament. But she didn't only plan the campaigns, she took a central part in them, never asking others to do what she wouldn't do herself whether delivering leaflets, knocking on doors, writing letters or phoning residents. She spent time supporting other people who were hoping to be elected in Stockton and across the region and forged strong links with Lib Dems in other towns in the North East as well as across the country. In May 2019 she celebrated the successful election of her new co-councillor, David Minchella.



Campaigning in 2014

One thing Julia never forgot was that sometimes people who have time and talent to offer don't have the money to make things happen. She proposed to the local party that we should give financial help to access training, that we should buy PAYG mobile phones in order to allow campaigners access to a mobile phone without cost to themselves, and should choose venues with level access for member meetings when we might have someone with mobility difficulties.



Julia with her Birthday cake

Julia was strongly committed to Fairtrade and determined that Stockton Council would actually stick to the spirit as well as the letter of their pledge of support. She led by example, helping on promotional events and even holding her birthday celebration on World Fairtrade

Day in Preston Park so that she could share her birthday cake and information about Fairtrade with other visitors to the park.

In July 2008 Julia married fellow Stockton Liberal Democrat and Fairtrade supporter, Mike Cherrett.



Despite all these achievements Julia would never have wanted her legacy to be static. The best way that we can celebrate her memory is to carry on campaigning, standing up for the under-privileged, working to make the world fairer, kinder and more just for everyone.