

My name is Antonia, and I have been a resident of Maulden for the past four years. During this time, and particularly over the last year, I have seen first-hand the positive and meaningful impact parish councillors can have on the lives of local residents. This experience has inspired me to offer my time and skills to serve the community as a parish councillor.

Currently, I am a stay-at-home mother to my young son, Hugh. Prior to this, I operated a successful independent bookshop, *Books on the Hill* in St Albans, for five years. This role encompassed a wide range of responsibilities, including event planning and chairing, financial management, payroll, and the leadership of a team comprising both staff and volunteers.

Community engagement was at the heart of the business. I collaborated with schools and local groups such as the Brownies to support literacy and learning, and I regularly hosted author events on important topics including child loss and neurodiversity. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, I swiftly adapted by creating an online platform for the bookshop, enabling us to reach a wider audience and continue serving our customers in challenging times.

Alongside my professional background, I have also volunteered extensively with heritage organisations as an archaeologist and archive assistant. I hold a Master's degree in Archaeology, with a particular focus on trade and diet in Roman Britain. These experiences have provided me with strong organisational skills, a collaborative approach, and a passion for heritage and community service.

Most recently, I became involved in a local planning matter that had the potential to negatively affect our community. I took an active role by gathering and consolidating neighbour feedback into a single forum, arranging a community meeting in my home, and organising a site walk with councillors. This collaborative approach proved to be both constructive and impactful. It further reinforced my desire to contribute more formally to the work of the Parish Council. I believe my diverse experience, strong communication skills, and genuine commitment to Maulden make me a strong candidate for the role of parish councillor. I would welcome the opportunity to serve and support our local community in a more official capacity.

Thank you for considering my application.