

## Councillor Case Study: Pamela Hargreaves

**Political Party:** Labour

**Positions Held:**



Executive Member for Regeneration and Economic Development

**Why did you become a Councillor?**

I have had an interest in politics almost from as far back as I can remember - which I went on to study, with Law, at Durham University - I think this stems from my somewhat inability to keep quiet when I see people being treated unfairly or when I see people making decisions which affect other's lives without much knowledge of the circumstances or care about the consequences. I volunteered full-time during Lord Mandelson's election in 2001 and my decision to stand locally came as a result of what I'd seen and heard whilst out on the streets campaigning.

**How did you find the process of standing to become a Councillor?**

I am a member of a long-established political party (Labour) so the process of

being selected is pretty-well organised and therefore relatively straight-forward and once selected the party supports its candidates around the legal requirements of elections, election materials and campaigning strategies. I found my first election one of the most exciting and exhilarating experiences I've had so far in political life - it was also completely nerve-racking and exhausting but that just added to the 'buzz'.

**Have you had any achievements that you are proud of since being elected?**

In 7 years, I've had quite a number of successes that I'm very proud of but to pick out a couple:

- Chairing the Building Schools for the Future Board, which led on the consultation - developing a vision for our secondary schools - and as a result developed the business case that secured the £100m to re-build ALL of our secondary schools.
- Recently, I've been very lucky to be a part of the 'Buy Local' campaign run by HBC which has so far been responsible for rejuvenating the town's indoor market and is now working to do the same for the outdoor market.
- I got involved as a volunteer with Hartlepool Youth Ltd through NDC and have driven forward, as Chair of the Board, a massive overhaul of the organisation because it had

substantial problems. As a result, we have just opened a refurbished part of our building as a commercial venture - Taste@ONE77. The bistro is staffed by young people who are currently not in education, employment or training and is already turning a profit (all of which are ploughed back into the Charity).

Whilst these are big examples, quite often it is the small things you get asked to do for individuals that gives me the greatest satisfaction - getting someone's bushes cut when they've been struggling to do it themselves because of age or mobility issues or simply making a telephone call to the right individual so that an issue can be sorted swiftly.

### **What are the difficulties you face as a Councillor?**

For me, as someone who also works full-time, it's finding the time to fit everything in. As a Cabinet member there are a lot of meetings and papers to read that constituents don't realise I have to find time to do - this makes it impossible to physically get to every meeting so you have to find other ways to get things done. Fortunately, I'm almost permanently attached to my mobile, Blackberry and laptop!

### **How do you manage to juggle your life and your work as a Councillor?**

It is difficult to squeeze everything in sometimes but for me all of the things I am involved in are, in their essence, about the same thing - making the lives of people in

Hartlepool better and giving our young people as many opportunities as we can for them to widen their horizons and fulfil their potential.

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