

Parish Council Obituary for Rich Morgan

We were all deeply saddened to hear of the untimely death of our dear friend and fellow councillor, Rich Morgan, who passed away recently following a short illness. His death leaves an immense void for his partner Bev, his extended family, and the many people whose lives he touched through his music, amateur dramatics, the Parish Council, and the wider village community.

I first met Rich at Christmas in the Redan in 2010. We'd only been in the village for a few days and, in the crowded pub on Christmas Eve, here was this commanding figure in a white jacket with a red flower in his lapel. He was impossible to miss, instantly engaging, and went out of his way to make us feel welcome. That was the sort of man Rich was.

Over the years I'd occasionally go for a drink after council meetings with Rich, Paul and Philip, even although I wasn't a councillor. Rich was always happy to talk about council business and, I have to say, was especially keen to mention vacant council seats.

Rich spent many years working for the NHS in the lab at RUH, finally retiring from the senior role of Chief Biomedical Scientist.

Music was one of Rich's greatest passions. He was a talented band member, singer, guitarist and song writer. Few things made him happier than standing in front of an audience with a guitar in his hands. He had a wonderful repertoire, but I suspect many people will always associate him with *Harvest Moon* by Neil Young. I think he'd smile at me for saying that.

Rich also loved amateur dramatics. Most memorably, he played the lead role in a CADS production of MacBeth which is no small achievement. He was gifted with a great sense of humour, something we often enjoyed in Council at appropriate, lighter moments. I understand that he had a great love of Lord of the Rings and read it several times!

For many village residents however, Rich was best known for his dedication to the Parish Council where he served since December 2006 as both a councillor and

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Vice Chair. His workload was immense, serving on and chairing numerous committees, such as Finance, IT, Traffic/Speeding, Green, and the Old Rec. He was also very happy to interact with district councillors and our MP on council matters.

Perhaps his greatest council contribution was in helping to protect the village from undesired or inappropriate development. His knowledge of the planning system was exceptional. Time and again he represented the village with determination and meticulous attention to detail, often taking on experienced lawyers and other professionals and achieving remarkable results. His lead work on the Gladman planning appeal stands as a lasting example of his commitment and expertise.

Rich was also instrumental in ensuring the Council's online presence and technology, policies, and procedures remained up to date, effective and fit for purpose. He believed in strong governance, proper and sufficient funding, responsible spending, and making sure the Council focused limited village resources on what really mattered.

Looking back on everything he contributed to the council and to Chilcompton, it is easy to understand why Rich was so loved, admired and respected as a councillor and as a friend, musician and actor.

Rich is greatly missed by his family, by the music community, by his many friends, and by all of us on the Parish Council. In time, others may take on the roles he fulfilled but his spirit, humour and character live on and can never be replaced.

As well as his partner Bev, Rich is survived by adult children Joel, Bryony and Ghislaine plus as I understand at least one grandchild.

Written by Cllr Sinclair