

Malcolm Spalding

**A Political Tribute by Andrew Foster,
Chairman of Kensington, Chelsea & Fulham Conservatives**

11th June 2022

Malcolm's role as a local Councillor was tremendously important to him... But the most important thing for Malcolm was representing Earl's Court – his community, his neighbourhood and the area of London which he had cherished and called his home for many years.

I have been asked, in my capacity as Chairman of the Kensington, Chelsea & Fulham Conservatives, to talk a little about Malcolm's political life – which I am honoured to do - as well as valuing him as a political colleague, I was proud to call Malcolm my friend.

Malcolm was first elected as an Earl's Court Councillor in 2014 but his work as a community activist and campaigner pre-dated that by many years. He was returned again in 2018 with a substantial personal vote, reflecting the support and popularity he enjoyed in the Ward. There is no doubt that he would have been re-elected again this year.

Within the Council, Malcolm's work was extensive. He has chaired Environment and Public Realm Scrutiny Committees, and was vice-chairman of Grenfell Recovery. He served on many Council Committees: Planning Applications; Licensing; Adult Social Care & Health; the Pensions Board, and was chairman of Member Training & Development, and Public Transport. He has served on, or chaired, special groups including Short-Term Holiday Lettings; Anti-Social Behaviour and Social Housing; Pre-Planning Advice; the CCTV Advisory Board; and the Westway Trust.

Malcolm was also the chairman of the Earl's Court Society – in that role – alongside his role as a councillor – he led the local response to the planning applications for the Earl's Court Exhibition Centre Site. Malcolm amassed a huge body of work in understanding and communicating residents' views, the demand for public green spaces, a major cultural venue, proper amenities and transport capacity, and particularly the widespread public objections to high-rise development.

Other local campaigns that Malcolm initiated and led focused on improving Earl's Court and making it a better place to live:

- Graffiti - Malcolm was regularly to be seen leading teams of volunteers in hi-viz vests scrubbing down walls – and arranged initiatives such as greening and planting to discourage graffiti and vandalism.

- Short-term holiday lets - he led a Council review of short-term letting, highlighting the problems of noise nuisance, rubbish dumping and ASB - he lobbied for regulatory and practical changes to reduce and mitigate these problems.
- Revitalising Earl's Court Road - Malcolm understood that working with, rather than against, local businesses was the best way to improve the area and he championed the development of a Business Improvement District.
- Earl's Court has increasingly suffered from a rise in Anti-Social Behaviour and Malcolm recently produced a comprehensive plan to deal with its root causes. In what many have described as his finest political hour, in March this year, Malcolm presented this plan to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the form of a Councillor's Call For Action. The plan gained unanimous support and has been passed to the Leadership Team with the recommendation of implementing it in full.

Malcolm's work as a Councillor, an activist and a community champion was extensive. However, his work alone does not fully describe his impact on our community and political life. It is also his personal qualities that we will remember:

- an honourable man,
- a kind and gentle man,
- dedicated community champion,
- great local advocate,
- shining star in the community
- an inspiration
- filled with pride, energy and good ideas
- relentless and resilient
- fantastic sense of humour
- warm and generous

These are comments from messages of condolence Malcolm's family received from Councillors, both Conservative and Labour, from Council Officers, from our MP, Felicity Buchan and from many local residents (including prominent local resident Rishi Sunak who described Malcolm as "an amazing and tireless Councillor").

Political and public life is sadly nowadays tainted by the way people treat each other. Malcolm brought old-school decency to his public roles and it is that quality, as well as his work for the community that we will remember - and which stands as his legacy.
