

## PARISH COUNCILLOR JOSE CASTRO

### WRITTEN STATEMENT

Resident in Staplehurst since 2015, with my partner, who has lived here since 1998. I have been in the country, however, since 2002 and feel completely identified with its values and way of life. Prior to that, I have lived in various parts of the world: namely Spain (where I am originally from), Ireland, USA and the Republic of Armenia until I finally settled here. I have always been involved in education, mostly at University level as a lecturer, before I arrived in the UK. Currently a Head of Department at a secondary school in South London.

I have always felt attracted by a more rural way of life and that is why I love living here. For years I have been running regularly through different roads around the village, taking part in various races organised by the running club, but switched to regular cycling when my knees gave up. Thus, I know the area and the roads around quite well.

I feel quite passionate about the idea of making the community feel it is a community. Hence, I decided to start contributing to small tasks like dealing with the planters, clearing the Parade, attending and promoting the men's shed or simply by giving my point of view. I always try to be respectful and I never refuse a good conversation with anyone. I believe I am quite conciliatory and a good listener. I am interested in the environment and in the cultural side of society (lectures, workshops, exhibitions, theatre, festivals, gastronomy, ethnology...) as I do think it is what provides a true feeling of community.

I have had the honour to have been selected as a councillor by co-option and feel I could certainly contribute with ideas and support. Even though I would be, first of all, eager to learn from the very experienced councillors that currently sit on the Parish Council, whom I admire for their altruistic contribution to the community.