

# **Giorgio Finella - Personal Statement**

## **Who I Am**

Hi, my name is Giorgio Finella. I've lived in Hove since 2003 and previously studied at the University of Brighton between 1991 and 1995. I'm a lifelong Labour supporter and a member of the GMB since 2007. I love Brighton & Hove and what it stands for: a welcoming home to all.

I have previously worked as a Researcher/Analyst at Lambeth Council, the Greater London Authority (supporting the Labour London Mayor) and the Probation Service. I have worked closely with other public sector agencies, including the Police, NHS, Health and Crime Reduction Partnerships. Following a year out of work to care for my elderly mother, I returned to work as a Business Analyst with an Insurance company.

I am vice-chair of Blatchington Mill School PTA, which I have used to focus on addressing the dangers of online abuse. I also help at the Sussex Homeless Support charity, helping to load the van and providing food and clothing to the homeless. I am a regular evening volunteer on the homeless bus, chatting to the rough sleepers and listening to their stories and aspirations.

My recent Involvement with the Labour Party has included:

- Successfully proposing motions at both Branch and Constituency Labour Party level, including motions to stop transphobic behaviour; to re-admit Labour comrades suspended without charge; and to condemn the IDF's unprovoked attack in Gaza of unarmed protesters;
- Volunteering on street stalls; door knocking; leaflet dropping; organising and helping to deliver campaigning and fundraising events, including the Wish and Westbourne fundraising housing event; and
- Been a member of the CLP fundraising subcommittee, having organised and helped at events.

## **Why I Wish to be a Labour Councillor**

Our politics, our country and our party have suffered major recent setbacks:

- In 2015 Labour lost the General Election
- In 2016 the Remain campaign lost the EU referendum
- Jeremy Corbyn had to fight two elections to become and then secure his position as Leader of the Labour party
- In 2017 the Labour party came back from a 20 point deficit to almost win the election.

These events have shown me that if we want change, we need to get actively involved at local level to make it happen. We need a majority Labour Council here in Brighton & Hove; and Elected Councillors must be in tune with current Labour Party membership and our local community needs. My recent experience on the doorstep and working within the local Labour Party tells me that I can do this and do it well.

## **What are the Big Issues in Brighton & Hove?**

With over 40% cuts in council funding since 2010, this means no decisions or services are immune to difficulties. The Revenue Support grant for 2015/6 was £46m by 2019/20 it will be £2m. Central Government is inflicting pain and suffering and making local government the scapegoat. Labour

councillors throughout the country have a duty to ensure the most vulnerable and excluded residents continue to receive the necessary support.

Brighton & Hove City Council needs to continue to deliver a wide range of public services. However, my priorities are:

- **Homelessness** – No-one should be without a home. Our city has the second highest level of rough sleepers in the UK, but we are not addressing the problem adequately. I would campaign for more council housing and work hard to improve security for tenants in the private rented sector.
- **Mental Illness** - Brighton has some of the highest levels of mental illness in the country, I believe these issues are not happening in isolation and need to be seen in the context of Austerity and how it has affected the mental wellbeing of vulnerable adults and children.
- **Social Care** - Everyone in social care must be treated with dignity and respect;
- **Education** – the life chances of our children depend on a high quality, properly resourced and equitable education system that genuinely provides opportunities for all.
- **Accountability** – I believe we need local residents to hold councillors to account and that their views are respected and acted upon wherever possible. For example, I would increase the amount of time for residents to have the opportunity to ask questions of their elected representatives: at present there is only 24 hours following the agenda for Council meetings being published, for residents to read all the documents and submit questions. I believe this is unrealistic for meaningful questions to be drafted and could be interpreted as an unwillingness on the part of councillors to enter into meaningful dialogue with residents.
  
- Austerity disproportionately affects women, children and those least able to cope. We need to increase mediation on behalf of all those claiming benefits and ensure they are claiming all they are entitled to. Universal credit has been an unmitigated disaster for all those concerned and has made many more people homeless.

**With your Support I can win this Seat and We can effect meaningful change in this Council.**