

THE POSTE OF STONE • STONE

LOCAL CHAMPION ANDREW GATHERS NO MOSS IN STONE



Andrew Best, shift manager at The Poste of Stone (Stone) for the past seven years, is the epitome of a local community champion.

Andrew was born and brought up in Stone, where he has always lived and, as well as full-time work for Wetherspoon, he is also a local councillor, school governor, pubwatch chair and became deputy mayor of Stone for 2022/3.

For the townsfolk of Stone, Mr Best is certainly living up to his family name.

A family man himself, with three children aged 13, 10 and five, Andrew was already vice-chair of the school governing board, when he was approached in 2019 to become a local councillor for Walton North ward.

Andrew revealed: "I was already known for my work in the community, when I was asked to stand for the Stone Independents Group and subsequently elected to the post.

"It is not so much about the politics, but making sure that local people look after the town and its residents, ensuring that Stone gets what it needs."

Andrew's role is chair of estates, which includes helping to run community buildings in the town, among them the Frank Jordan Centre community space and the council-leased railway station premises, with Andrew overseeing the budget and upkeep.

When the Stone Town Mayor Cllr Jonathan Powell embarked on his second term in office, he nominated Andrew as deputy, much to the agreement of fellow councillors.

This latest role involves attending events and functions, charity fundraising and deputising for the mayor.

Andrew said: "My kids think it's really funny that I'm deputy mayor, and my wife is supportive.

"My mum and dad, who have always lived in Stone, are quite proud though."

As well as school governor meetings, council meetings and deputy mayoral duties, Andrew is also chair of Stone pubwatch, a role he took on during the lockdown period.

He admitted: "I was already involved and attended pubwatch meetings, representing The Poste of Stone, but, when the previous chair resigned, it was decided that I was the natural successor."

However, Andrew's career in the pub industry came about only by (happy) accident, after he returned home from teacher training college, having already decided that that career path "wasn't for me".

Andrew recalled: "I walked to the pub (The Poste of Stone) to drown my sorrows, having moved back home, and the pub manager said come and work for me instead."

That was 16 years ago, when he started as a bar associate at Stone, before several moves and career progressions, among them at The Picture House (Stafford), The Old Swan (Uttoxeter), The Thomas Botfield (Telford), The Wheatsheaf (Cheadle) and The Acorn Inn (Lichfield).

He returned to The Poste of Stone in 2015 as a shift manager, where he has worked since.

Andrew is also keen to stand again next year for re-election as councillor, although the role of mayor may be one step too far.

Andrew smiled: "I've seen the mayor's diary – and he is very busy. "I'm not sure that I would fit everything in."