

Revd Canon Christina Upton – Chair



Tina Upton has lived and worked in Blacon since January 2012. She is Church of England vicar at Holy Trinity Church, and over those years, she has developed close working relationships with a wide variety of organisations who work in the community, from schools to nursing homes.

Holy Trinity Church has built up a thriving Community Outreach Project under Tina's leadership, which collaborates with many organisations. Additionally, Tina helped found the food charity Pantry for Blacon (known as Blacon Beacon), which started up in 2020. She

is Chair of Trustees for this charity. Through the work of Holy Trinity Church, and also of Blacon Beacon, Tina has become well known in Blacon and has earned the trust of many local residents.

Before coming to Blacon, she lived for many years on the Wirral, and prior to ordination in the church she worked first as a doctor, and then as a teacher. Tina is married, and has three grown-up children, and also four grandchildren.

Jack Davies, Deputy Chair



Jack Davies has lived in Blacon for over thirty years. Professionally, he is Interim Head of Place Partnerships at Active Cheshire, collaborating with local authorities, health partners, and voluntary sectors. Jack also serves as a Trustee for Cheshire West Voluntary Action, bringing solid experience in governance and accountability.

Jack's values are inclusive and collaborative; he firmly believe local people should be at the heart of community decisions. Jack looks forward to using his passion for Blacon and professional experience to amplify local voices and drive positive, long-term change for Blacon.

Helen Bromley – Board Member



As Director of Public Health at Cheshire West and Chester Council, Helen leads work to improve health and wellbeing, reduce inequalities, and protect communities from public health risks. As the Council's principal adviser on health, Helen works closely with residents, partners and local organisations to create healthier places.

Helen is passionate about supporting community-led initiatives such as Pride in Place in Blacon, recognising the vital role that local pride, connection and strong neighbourhoods play in improving health, wellbeing and opportunities for everyone.

Karen Crawford - Board Member



Karen has lived in Blacon for over 13 years, where her two children are growing up attending local schools and clubs. Karen has supported community groups, built strong local connections, and works at the Countess of Chester Hospital. This gives Karen a real understanding of local families opportunities and challenges.

Professionally, Karen is a Senior Clinical Coding and AI Quality Assurance Analyst within the NHS, with experience in data analysis, evidence-based decisions, service improvement, stakeholder collaboration, and accountability. Karen is passionate about Blacon and hopes to use her skills to help shape the £20 million Investment Plan.

Russ Dean – Board Member



Russ has lived in Blacon for 37 years and is passionate about helping the community reach its full potential. Russ volunteers with Blacon Youth Football Club and Chester FC Academy, working closely with young people, families and volunteers across the area. Over the years, Russ has also supported a range of local fundraising and community initiatives.

Professionally, Russ works in a leadership role as an Ombudsman, bringing experience in governance, leadership, decision-making, stakeholder engagement and performance management. Russ is committed to ensuring all residents' voices are heard and helping deliver lasting, positive change that benefits the whole Blacon community.

Samantha Dixon MP – Board Member



Sam is proud to have represented Blacon for almost four years since her election to Parliament in December 2022. As the Member of Parliament for Blacon and previously as Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council, Sam has felt the strong sense of community spirit felt by Blacon residents.

Sam wants to make sure Blacon residents are at the heart of Pride in Place and that they are involved wherever possible at Neighbourhood Board meetings.

This is a significant opportunity to make sure that the aspirations for everyone who lives here are met., Sam will make sure she uses every opportunity available to her to help maximise the benefits to Blacon from this

programme.

Photo credit Michelle Webster

Councillor Carol Gahan – Board Member



Carol was elected as a councillor for the Blacon Ward in May 2015 following a varied career working in the Hospitality sector, running her own business and more latterly qualifying as a CIPFA trained accountant working at Chester City Council and Cheshire Wesat and Chester Borough Council for 12 years. Carol is in her eighth year as Cabinet member for Finance and Legal with constitutional decision-making responsibilities for setting an annual Balanced budget, capital programme delivery, the property portfolio and being Shareholder representative for Council Companies including LGPS Central.

Blacon has areas of high deprivation, and Carol has worked with residents to improve lives and amenities within the ward, including supporting local organisations with roles such as volunteer, treasurer, school governor and on the Council of Governors for two local hospitals.

Carol believes she can use her experience and expertise to support the Board to develop and help deliver a regeneration plan that will improve Blacon and the lives of its residents.

Mrs Karen Smith – Board Member



Karen has lived in Blacon with her husband and family for over 43 years and has been actively involved in the local community.

11 years ago, Karen co-founded the social enterprise Here and Now with a group of dedicated volunteers. Established in response to the lack of local activities for older isolated residents, including people living with memory loss. Here and Now also works closely with local organisations and facilitates intergenerational activities for local schools.

Karen's previous roles in health, social care, housing, and the third sector have

given her a varied range of skills. Karen is passionate about Blacon, the place she lives and works in.

David Stockdale – Board Member



David has worked at Blacon High School for 14 years. Joined as Head of English and has been a Senior Leader for 10 years+. Responsibilities include leading a very active Student Leadership Team (Yr 11) and Student Parliament (Yrs 7-10).

David has been responsible for lots of community activities connected with the school. For example: the BEV Democracy Group – a cross-phase initiative involving the Blacon Primary Schools, the Chester Schools Together Alliance – a collaborative working group of five Chester secondary schools. Students have developed links at local, national

and international level. David's focus is always to enhance community engagement.

Paul David Wallbanks – Board Member



Paul has lived in Blacon for 21 years with his wife and 3 children. Paul successfully ran a community roller skating group for 3 years. Paul is also the author of the self-funded 'Blacon What's On Guide' that ensures that local Community groups receive free advertising (and visibility), within the estate.

Paul is a Principal Piping / Plant Designer and has over 30 years' experience in feasibility studies, concept reports, optioneering, competitive tendering, bid analysis, basis of design, client / construction reviews etc. Paul is a professional, conscientious person always thinking of others, and has a natural talent of analysing everything, debating "how could

that be done better, cheaper, safer"?