

Maggie Bosanquet

Doctor of Science

Durham Cathedral, 28 June 2022

Maggie Bosanquet manages Durham County Council's Low Carbon Economy Team. She is in her third term on the Advisory Board of the Durham Energy Institute and is the university's key conduit for cooperation with the Council. She supported the establishment of the Masters in Energy and Society here at Durham University in 2014, funding staff to join our modules and helping us ensure the programme was relevant and effective, and working with us on numerous research initiatives for staff and students,

She describes herself as an 'accidental environmentalist', but there is no accident to the drive and determination that make her such an effective champion for environmental justice. She is not a person who seeks the limelight, but all of us at the Energy Institute are acutely aware that she is truly the engine driving many of the environmental and climate initiatives at Durham County Council.

She tells me she was inspired by a Polish Chemistry teacher at school in Colchester, a teacher whose experiments could end up with the fire brigade arriving, whose enthusiasm inspired the class, even if his poor English led them to fail their exams. The inspiration remained with Maggie, through a degree in Social History at Lancaster University.

You couldn't accuse Maggie of having a well-laid out career plan on leaving university. She lived on a commune for a while, before training with the Richmond Fellowship therapeutic community, becoming a psychiatric social worker. Only after marrying, having four children, living in Germany, and then returning to live in Darlington, did she, as she says, 'accidentally' set up an environmental campaigning group, Darlington Environmental Watch, securing an Award for their environmental works, if not for their campaigning against unwelcome local developments. In 1992, by then a single mother, she took a Masters in European Environmental Policy and Regulation, again at Lancaster University. In 1995 she got a job at Groundwork as Local Agenda 21 officer, seconded to the very council she had campaigned against. From there she

moved into County Durham, and by 2009 she had built a team of 12 people. She now manages a multi-million pound budget and influences national policy. She has set up and guided several regional and national partnership organisations to move us into a Low Carbon Economy.

When Maggie says that if she saw her job advertised, she would think, 'I could never do that', she is being characteristically modest. Maggie can find a way through the bureaucracy to make things happen, enabling projects to transform the use of buildings to slash their energy use, install hundreds of rural electric vehicle charging points, or write a Climate Emergency Response plan for the whole county, just to name a few.

Alongside this ability to make change for the better, Maggie has the gift of friendship, and a clear ethical and moral stance based on kindness and care. In her support for nurturing partnerships with students and staff alike, she is a role model for all of us.

Chancellor I present Maggie Bosanquet to receive the degree of Doctor of Science honoris causa.