



In defence of councillors

Colin Copus

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The book does what it says on the cover: defends councillors and the institution of local representative democracy to which they are elected the council from the often ill-informed, ill-judged and inaccurate criticism of their personal, professional and political roles as local politicians. In doing so it explores what the shift from local government to local governance has meant for councillors, the roles, functions and activities they undertake, the pressures they experience, the links they have with their parties and the relationships they forge with citizens and communities. It takes a critical look at the impact that elected membership of a council has on the working, private and social life of the councillor and the strategies they develop to balance the various aspects of their lives with the expectations of the office they hold.

The book contributes to theoretical and conceptual understanding of local politics and develops valuable lessons for the practice of local representative democracy. It is based on qualitative research and provides a deep and rich understanding of the realities of holding the office of councillor. It examines how the one local elected body the council and its members councillors operate in complex networks of organisations to bring their democratic mandate to bear to democratise and hold to account those that spend public money and make public policy with no democratic mandate or legitimacy.

The book fills the gaps in our understanding about the office of councillor by up-dating the ideas we have about what councillors do, how they do it and the effect that they can have when acting as representatives, decision-makers and governors. As such, the book will be of interest to councillors, policy-makers and local government officers as well as academics, researchers and post-graduate students.

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