

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

Monday, October 9

Excellence award for Fenland planning team member

Support from her team was instrumental in securing a Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) excellence award, a member of Fenland District Council's planning team has said.

Danielle Brooke was named a RTPI Awards for Research Excellence 2023 winner.

Danielle was recognised for the dissertation that formed part of her MSc in Town Planning with Anglia Ruskin University.

She got a distinction after two-and-a-half years working towards her masters degree with the support of the district council. She gained the RTPI's 'Student Award,' having already secured the RTPI Professor Tony Hall Memorial Prize.

The council has a track record of supporting team members with professional development and several others in the planning team are also pursuing further qualifications, including development officer Tracy Ranger, who completed her masters the year before Danielle. Danielle is particularly grateful for Tracy's support.

Danielle said: "The team I work with is fabulous.

"I wouldn't have done the dissertation, degree or got the award if it hadn't been instigated by them.

"Big thanks to Tracy Ranger – she has waded through the chaos to help me find a path to follow behind. And, also to my brilliant managers, who are like gold dust.

"It's a great team, close knit, we all work hard to deliver the best service we can.

"I really enjoy working for Fenland District Council, everyone is really friendly."

Danielle juggled her full-time council role and family life with her husband and two children with completing her studies part-time over two-and-a-half years.

For her dissertation she created a tool that measured the quality of green spaces, which judges felt could become a valuable widespread assessment tool to help evaluate and improve parks. The work was supported by Fenland residents who completed surveys in person and via Fenland District Council's social media channels.

Danielle said: "After 14,000 words, eight months of work, blood sweat and tears and lots of negotiating with the kids over not being able to watch that football match or go on that day out it was validating to have my work professionally recognised and to be told what I'd created was good and useful."

Danielle is now working towards gaining professional accreditation with the RTPI.

Cllr Dee Laws, Fenland District Council's portfolio holder for planning, said: "We're so proud of Danielle's achievements and delighted to know she felt well supported in her studies.

"It's wonderful to see so much professional development being pursued and encouraged within Fenland District Council."

Dr Negar Ahmadpoor, Course Director for the MSc in Town Planning (Degree Apprenticeship) at Anglia Ruskin University (ARU), said: "Danielle provided a masterclass in how to balance a full-time planning role with apprenticeship studies, and this Royal Town Planning Institute award is wonderful recognition of her hard work and dedication.

"For her dissertation, Dannielle chose to carry out a research project which could have enormous impact for people living in Fenland. We enjoyed in-depth discussions in our supervision meetings, and Danielle exhibited thoroughness in every aspect of her research, from the comprehensive literature review to meticulous research design and precise data analysis. It has been a pleasure working with Danielle and we all wish her the very best for her future career."

- Fenland District Council is recruiting to its planning team. See: www.fenland.gov.uk/vacancies

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Photo:

Danielle Brooke receives the RTPI Awards for Research Excellence 2023 'student award'.