

## **JONATHAN SIMPSON, MBE**

- Councillor for Kings Cross Ward since 2002 [20 years]
- Mayor (twice): 2010-11; 2013-14
- Cabinet member for Community Safety; also Communities & Culture [until 2020]
- Camden's Arts community Champion
- Awarded MBE in Queen's Birthday Honours, 2021 for his work championing Camden's live music venues and cultural organisations.

Lives: Kentish Town (off Rochester Square) *[from interview]*

**Education:** BA Politics and Philosophy (UCL) 1992-1995  
MA Philosophy (Birkbeck) 1995-97

### **Link to Camden Council's Register of Interests**

<https://democracy.camden.gov.uk/mgDeclarationSubmission.aspx?UID=220&HID=3132&FID=0&HPIID=52529372>

### **Appointment to outside bodies**

- Camden Arts Centre

### **Non-pecuniary interests**

- Trustee of Amy Winehouse Foundation
- Member of GMB Union

**Employment:** Business Director, Cascade Communications

<https://www.cascadecommunications.co.uk>

Cascade is a specialist communications consultancy committed to delivering strategic advice and results for our clients in property, development, planning and construction. We have earned a well-respected reputation for delivering some of the most high-profile and complex developments in London and the South East. *[from Cascade's Linked In]*

<https://www.cascadecommunications.co.uk/2022/02/local-elections-whos-standing-down-in-may/>

Written by Jonathan Simpson, 22 Feb 2022

**Previous employment:** Director at Quatro Public relations

Combining expertise and experience with a network of influential connections, we help our clients to cut through the red tape, bypass the bureaucracy and get their message heard. We specialise in providing advice and consultancy across property, infrastructure planning and campaigns, to encourage support, raise awareness and build trust. *[from website]*

### **Jonathan Simpson on Youtube**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7JK1H51N08>

### **Supporter / promoter of the West End Project from its inception**

From: Minutes of Cabinet meeting: 21.01.15

Cabinet Councillors: Sarah Hayward (Chair), Theo Blackwell, Patricia Callaghan, Julian Fulbrook, Abdul Hai, Angela Mason, Phil Jones, Sally Gimson and **Jonathan Simpson**.

Councillors Harrison, Madlani and Francis, Bloomsbury ward councillors were present at the meeting and expressed their support for the proposals. Councillor Jones thanked the ward councillors for their work and involvement in this project.

**Interviews / articles on-line include:**

<https://www.hamhigh.co.uk/news/birthday-honours-jonathan-simpson-mbe-councillor-8045544>  
[June 11 2021](#). (links not working)

### **Birthday Honours: Cllr Jonathan Simpson 'astonished' to be made MBE**

Long-serving Camden Councillor Jonathan Simpson said he was "astonished and delighted" to be made an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Cllr Simpson, 47, [recently stepped down as cabinet member at the town hall](#), but has no intention of stepping back as a councillor, and has promised to continue to be a vocal advocate for the borough's cultural assets.

Cllr Simpson was first elected in 2002 and has served as mayor twice.

The King's Cross councillor also currently chairs the Cultural Camden organisation.

He said he'd initially thought the email revealing his honour was a scam.

"I have to say thought it was an HMRC hoax initially," he said.

"But after I called and confirmed it with the cabinet office, I was astonished and delighted."

Cllr Simpson said he wanted to highlight how difficult the past year has been for Camden's cultural institutions.

He added: "When I think of the things I've achieved, it is things like bringing the cultural community together in Camden.

"But the reality and the really important thing is that Covid has brought such a huge challenge for our cultural sector. And as we recover my hope is to use this opportunity say to everyone in Camden: 'Go out there and support your local arts and cultural venues.'"

Among Cllr Simpson's other achievements over the years in public service are also a series of campaigns which raised awareness of domestic violence - especially in marginalised groups like the over-50s and the LGBTQ+ community.

Cllr Simpson was Camden's cabinet representative for community safety before taking up the culture brief, and spent six years at the town hall's top table.

He is also a trustee of the Amy Winehouse Foundation and Camden Arts Centre.

He said those he had been able to tell about the honour had been "absolutely delighted for me" and said he was looking forward to celebrating over the weekend.

Referencing another local who's name appears in the year's Birthday Honours, he added: "I'll be picking out a suit and maybe I'll get to go the palace with Arlene Phillips!"

<https://www.kentishtowner.co.uk/2014/01/28/ich-bin-kentishtowner-jonathan-simpson-mayor-camden/> Interview from January 2014 [**link not working**]

Jonathan Simpson is the Mayor of Camden, an elected councillor and Kentish Town resident. He's been described as the Rock n' Roll Mayor, but believes that as he's approaching 40 (February 4th, if you want to send a card) the title may be misguided. In addition to his work with the Amy Winehouse Foundation, he has, on occasion, been known to DJ at Barfly and local club night Friday I'm in Love. As past attendees will vouch for, he cannot sing.

**When were you happiest?**

In the last year, it was hosting a fundraiser on what would have been Amy Winehouse's 30th birthday in aid of the Foundation. Seeing veteran newsreader Jon Snow singing Blur's Parklife in front of 600 people was extremely memorable – but also knowing that our hard work in making the event special had paid off. A bittersweet evening, with a few tears shed at midnight.

**Where would you like to live?**

I think we're all lucky to live in the borough; nothing compares to it. I guess if Kenwood House was a residential property it would be a good place to live – but I love where I am (off Rochester Square).

**What is your favourite sound or smell?**

Smell would be the coffee from Mario's Café; sound would be the roar of the crowd at the Forum before a gig is about to start. Always deafening, but it reminds me why I moved to Camden many years ago.

**What is your greatest life achievement?**

Becoming Mayor of Camden is too obvious, so I'd say helping raise a lot of money for the Amy Winehouse Foundation over the last seven months, and knowing that it's going to some of London's most vulnerable young people. Hearing some of the stories of those who have had problems with drug or alcohol misuse is heartbreaking – but I know the charity will change lives. I'm incredibly proud that schools like Acland Burghley will get drug and alcohol awareness education this year through its work.

**What is the most important lesson life has taught you?**

No matter how silly you think an idea is, there will often be something excellent within it – so make sure you speak up.

**What is your earliest memory here?**

Coming down from Manchester to see a gig at the Forum aged 16. Kentish Town seemed big and scary at the time. I didn't think that I'd be living here a few years later.

**What makes you unhappy?**

The lack of good record stores locally. A couple of good ones left in Camden (and one in Kentish Town – ed) but there should be more. I'm a vinyl lover and it is sad that there isn't a record store in every high street. Digital music has destroyed the excellent stores we used to have.

**What is your guilty pleasure?**

Brisket at the Camden Town Brewery. Just incredible.

**Where do you hang out?**

I love the new members' bar in Camden, Record Club. I've been known to go to most live music venues in the area on a regular basis. I miss the Bull & Gate.

**What do you most dislike about your appearance?**

I'm nearly 40 and my beard is getting a little grey. Arrrrgh.

**What's the worst thing anyone's said to you?**

Someone said I was too old to DJ a few months ago. The person looked very young and hadn't heard of David Bowie; I took no notice of them and continued to do what could be best described as dad dancing.

**What has your career taught you?**

Enjoy every moment you can because the great times seem to go quickly. Also to hold on to your friends.

**What did you do today?**

It was Holocaust Memorial Day. Camden hosted the national launch with the Holocaust Memorial Trust, The Wiener Library, the Anne Frank Trust and the Jewish Museum. A hugely moving event.

**Tell us a secret.**

I'm known for loving guitar music but secretly love Eurovision. I'll be hosting a big event on the night of the final (May 10th) with the Friday I'm in Love crew. I cannot wait.

**What is your favourite dish and why?**

Good cheese is my downfall.