

## **Debbie Roche interview**

Debbie Roche admits she's got fire in her belly – and it's a fire that she's put to good use over the years.

Debbie is a member of the PCH Board and sits on our Audit and Risk Committee, Development Committee and Remuneration Panel.

Her interest in community work and helping others goes back to her 20s.

She said: "My mum was diagnosed with cancer in her 40s and died of it soon after. The idea of illness really hit me and made me more conscious of what's going on around me."

Sadly, she experienced illness again some years later when her 15-year-old son was diagnosed with anorexia. She needed to give up her job as a health and social care lecturer to be his round-the-clock carer.

She said: "I had to fight lots of battles during that time; for example, around access to services. It hurt me to think other families were going through the same battles. My son's condition enlightened me to mental health more profoundly."

Debbie, a former St Budeaux councillor, has always been a social activist. When she moved to Mount Wise nearly five years ago, she said it was 'in her nature' to become involved with the estate management committee there.

Home is important to Debbie, who is originally from Sheffield but moved to Plymouth nearly 30 years ago.

She added: "I love where I live. I feel comfortable in my home and I want to ensure others feel safe and comfortable in theirs too."

"As a community, Mount Wise is brilliant. We look after each other. If there are concerns – either minor or major, people can come in to the office and there's always someone there to help them."

It was only a matter of time then before Debbie decided to become involved with PCH, which owns the Pembroke Street Estate.

Debbie began her journey with the PCH Board by sitting on the Customer Focus Committee.

"The Customer Focus Committee is the heart of the Board," added Debbie, "It's really important we monitor the services that make people's lives better. Our business is residents. We mustn't forget who our customers are."

Debbie, a mum-of-three, would recommend that tenants get involved with PCH if they feel they have an interest.

She said: "We've all got something we can contribute. PCH recognises the importance and value of residents. There's always some way that residents can be involved."