



**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL**  
**72 MARKET STREET**  
**ELY**  
**CAMBS CB7 4LS**

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**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING & MAYOR MAKING**  
**HELD AT 7.30 PM ON MONDAY, 9TH MAY 2011**  
**IN THE CHURCH HALL, ST MARY'S CHURCH, ST MARY'S STREET, ELY**

**PRESENT:**

The Mayor, Cllr B Ashton  
Cllr P Eden  
Cllr W Burton  
Cllr A Winchester

Cllr S Overall  
Cllr J Yates  
Cllr E Griffin-Singh  
Cllr R Wood

Cllr R Hobbs  
Cllr J Chaplin  
Cllr M Rouse

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from the Mayor of Cambridge, Mayor of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Bishop of Huntingdon, Chief Constable Parr, RAFA, James Paice MP, Mayor of Chatteris, City of Ely Military Band, Ely Ribe Association, Mr John Hill, Mayor of March, Mayor of Thetford, Mayor of Peterborough, Lord Lieutenant, Group Captain B Walcot, Mayor of Downham Market, Chairman of Huntingdon District Council, Mr P Sindall, Mr & Mrs J Wilson, Mayor of St Neots, Mrs M Pickering, Chairman of Fenland District Council, Mayor of Whittlesey, Sir & Lady Baird, Mr J Hickish, Mrs S Hogben, Mrs S Sands, Mrs S Freestone, Mayor of Godmanchester and Dr & Mrs Lindsey.

**2. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2010/2011**

The Mayor, Cllr Brian Ashton welcomed everyone to the meeting. Eighteen months ago the City of Ely Council concluded that it wanted to take responsibility for an increasing range of services, currently provided by both East Cambs District Council and Cambs County Council for the people of Ely. This was not some grandiose aspiration, but an expression of the simple view that many matters could be more responsive if the decisions were made at a local level. He was pleased to report that there was an increasing acceptance that if it says "Ely on the box, it should be managed by Ely". At a practical level the Council has taken over the day to day responsibility for the provision of CCTV within Ely and Soham, based on equipment located in the Ely Police Station. Already the system is paying dividends, saving taxpayers in Ely, Soham and cross the District about £80,000 per annum, whilst enabling the excellent community police team to access recorded information in Ely, saving journeys to Cambridge. The system is based upon an expanding team of volunteers, who have been trained to meet national standards. Their part in the system is invaluable and he extended his thanks for their dedication and considerable effort in establishing the scheme. As more volunteers are recruited and trained he was confident that within another year or so the City would have one of the finest community/police based CCTV systems in the country.

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## **Out going Mayor's Report for 2010/11 continued .....**

He also reported that considerable progress is being made in discussions with East Cambs District Council about a wide range of services that the Council could provide in the future. The Council's recreation team have already taken responsibility for an additional play park and a sports field, with a further six play parks in the pipeline. The City Council is working with East Cambs District Council on resolving the public open space problems left by failed developers on the West of Ely and perhaps most exciting of all the Council is examining the transfer of the whole of the public open space at the Riverside in Ely to the City of Ely Council. Discussions are also under way with Cambs County Council to take over the practical aspects of managing the blossoming "cafe culture" on the streets of Ely.

On the negative side the Council had hoped to develop a new workshop at the Cemetery and during the year the plans were modified to include the relocation of the City Council's offices and Council Chamber to the same site, as a cost saving exercise. The rather utilitarian design for what had become a civic building, did not find favour with the local Planning Committee. As the matter was not without some dissent within the Council's own ranks, this may not have proved to have been a bad thing. It had always been his observation in life that reversals often open new opportunities. For the future he believed it had been beneficial for the Council to have been given a stronger voice in helping to prepare detailed plans for the future development of Ely. The Council is grateful to all those involved, especially the Church Commissioners and the officers and members of East Cambs District Council, as well as the County Council who have listened to the Council's local voice and amended plans accordingly.

There will be much change ahead and he thanked the Council's small workforce, ably lead by the Town Clerk, Tracey Coulson, for their willingness to respond to the demands that this will entail. On a lighter note; it had been a year of many significant civic events, including the installation of the new Bishop. There was one event which stood out, the Home Coming Parade, Cathedral Service and Reception for the men of The Royal Anglian Regiment, upon their return from service in Afghanistan. This is a day that will never be forgotten – a day of such powerful and mixed emotions that brought out the best in everyone. He extended the City's thanks to all those that helped make this day possible. To continue with the theme of volunteering, he and his wife Dene had decided that the focus for their year would be a "Celebration of the work of the volunteer within their community". They were grateful to Avril Hayter-Smith and the local Voluntary Services Organisation for helping them contact a wider range of community groups. They had been delighted to attend many events as a public recognition of the massive contribution of voluntary and charitable organisations with Ely. The highlights of this aspect of their work was the remarkable, successful service organised by his ever helpful and energetic Chaplain, Reverend Alan Hulme in the parish church of St Mary's. He thanked him for this. It was a delight to see the church full of those wishing to celebrate the efforts of volunteers within the community. He suspected that he did not even reach out to a fraction of those who give so much to the breadth of community life.

At the end of their term of office they were able to make sixteen grants of between £100 and £300 to local voluntary groups and he thanked the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation for helping them to reach a wider, local audience of prospective applicants.

He thanked the members of the City of Ely Council, who served during the last year and for helping make this year such a pleasant year for Dene and himself. He was especially grateful to his Deputy, Cllr John Yates, whose support throughout the year had been invaluable.

Above all he thanked his wife, Dene for her unstinting support and for being such an excellent Mayoress.

It had been an honour to be Mayor of the City once again and behalf of Dene and himself, he thanked everyone for their kindness and support.

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### **3. Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor**

Cllr Hobbs said that it seemed impossible that it was a year ago that he had proposed Brian for Mayor. He thought it had been one of the best decisions he had made. When choosing a Mayor it is usually “horses for courses” and Brian had proved to be a true thoroughbred. His financial expertise had returned a well sounded budget, with only a small increase, without the loss of any services. He felt Brian's mayor achievement must be CCTV. Whilst leading a small team he has achieved a much improved local service, at a much reduced cost, allowing parishioners to feel safe within their homes. This had been acclaimed as a great success by the Police and East Cambs District Council, and the growing number of volunteers that maintain this vital service.

Brian's year had been one of stability, laying down strong foundations and giving confidence to allow this Council to move forward and take on extra responsibilities in the future.

Brian and Dene had carried out numerous civic engagements. They have carried out these duties in a friendly and calm way, giving their time freely. Their recognition of all those who volunteer within the Parish had been much appreciated. Brian had left the City Council in a stronger position and shown the way forward to achieve services for the community.

### **4. Election of the Chairman who shall thereupon, in accordance with the Local Government Act of 1972, become the Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ely**

Cllr Hobbs said John had lived in the area for over 26 years and moved to Ely 11 years ago. He joined the City of Ely Council six years ago. He had brought to the Council a wealth of experience, having been a parish councillor in Wicken. John is not from these parts, but from Blackburn. He will be the second Mayor from Blackburn. John's professional and social life has all the credentials for being a Mayor. He had worked for 44 years within the NHS, having worked his way through several departments to become the Regional Planning Manager for the Regional Health Authority. John is married to Helen and has two daughters and a son, and two grandchildren. John had immersed himself in public life, being the Chairman of Cambridgeshire ACRE, Chairman of East Anglian Rural Affairs, church warden and Chairman of the Trustees of St Peter's Church and a member of the Hereward Rotary Club. Since joining the Council John had chaired the Cemetery Committee and recently chaired the successful Royal Wedding celebrations on Palace Green. He had been an extremely supportive Deputy Mayor. John has all the qualities and experience to carry the work of the Council forward and he had great pleasure in proposing Cllr John Yates as the Mayor of the City of Ely for 2011/2012.

Former councillor, Mr Ron Bradney had the privilege of seconding Cllr Yates as Deputy Mayor last year and it was his great pleasure to be able to second him as Mayor this year. He counted John as one of his good friends and hoped that this would continue for many years. This could change if John's team, Blackburn were to beat his team, Wolves at the last game of the season and Wolves were demoted. Even if this was the case, it was his great pleasure to second John as the Mayor of the City of Ely for the ensuing year.

By unanimous agreement Cllr Yates was elected as Chairman and Mayor.

*Cllr Yates, the retiring Mayor and the Clerk left the Hall and entered the robing room. Cllr Yates was invested with the robes and the Chain of Office. The Town Crier then announced the new Mayor and Cllr Yates re-entered the Hall*

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Cllr Yates explained that due to the Local Government Act 1974, following an election year there had to be three clear days before the new Chairman and Vice-Chairman could be officially elected. This had meant that he could not legally become the Chairman of the Council and the Mayor of the City of Ely until the next morning. Therefore, Cllr Ashton would remain Chairman until tomorrow and continued to chair the meeting.

### **5. Reading and Signing of the Declaration of Office and Swearing the Oath of Allegiance by the Mayor**

Cllr Yates read the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and swore the Oath of Allegiance. However, he would not sign this until the next morning.

### **6. Statement of Acceptance of Office by the Newly Elected Mayor**

Cllr Yates thanked everyone for their warm welcome and he felt privileged to find himself holding the office of Mayor of the City of Ely and Chairman of the City of Ely Council. He thanked his fellow councillors and recent councillors for their faith in him and he hoped that he could repay that trust. He assured them that he will undertake to work hard and to do his best.

He said that Cllr Ashton had given him an excellent resume of the last year and he thanked him for his leadership in representing Ely in a civic capacity, chairing meetings and in an executive capacity. He appreciated that he had involved him throughout the year, leaving him fully prepared. He will endeavour to follow him, particularly in moving the Council forward, which he had described earlier. This will be extremely challenging. The Council had previously made the District and County Councils aware of what services, in our opinion, could be transferred to the City of Ely Council. The Council is very upbeat and positive that these services could be delivered more effectively, responding to the population of Ely. However, without being negative, the Council needs to be realistic and careful to balance desire with the ability to deliver. In all possible future considerations the Council will need to take into account needs, costs and resources available.

The Council aims to continue to provide services for which they already have responsibility for at their acknowledged high standard. The Council will continue to look for efficiencies and to identify possibilities from which choice can be offered and at the same time create income generation.

This next year will undoubtedly present challenges and the opportunity to influence changes and future development in Ely. For example the development in the North of Ely, Master Plan, detailed consultation proposals for the centre of Ely and the approach to the rail station/Southern bypass. These issues will require the City Council to form opinion and to be in a position to effectively influence the planning process.

He said that the future role of the now vacated Courthouse could not be ignored. This remains the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. It is fortunate that the High Sheriff is present this evening and Sir, we are willing to work in whatever way towards a satisfactory solution.

He thanked Brian and Dene, on behalf of the City for all their endeavours and support for the volunteer section in the last year. They had significantly raised the profile of the volunteer, as well as being an inspiration to them. He would ensure that their endeavours continue. He felt there would be more opportunities for the Council to be more inclusive and work more closely with the volunteer sector in the future, particularly as more responsibilities are taken on.

He and his Consort had decided their theme for the year would be the Youth of Ely and the promotion of all that is good. He had been inspired by two individuals, Inspector Bartlett, when he was responsible for Ely and John Elworthy, Editor of the Wisbech Standard and Cambs Times, who had masterminded a programme calls KIDS are ALRIGHT.

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**Statement of Acceptance of Office by the Newly Elected Mayor continued .....**

Young people as a whole had been largely maligned in some of the national and local press over recent years. This had resulted in stereotypes surrounding law-abiding youth, who may simply be “hanging out”. They may not even be breaking the law. Such stereotypes can have a negative impact on relationships between generations, culminating in that elderly residents are afraid. In turn young people can feel isolated or disconnected from society.

His aim was to try and correct this position by promoting positive images of those “doing good things in the community”. Breaking down barriers by spreading the message that most young people do lead crime free lives. Boosting community spirit by highlighting where young people do make contributions. As a consequence he hoped to change public attitudes to young people.

He thanked Reverend Alan Hulme for being his Chaplain for the year and also thanked his family for their support.

*The Consort, Mrs Gillian Collier was then invested with the Chain of Office by the retiring Mayoress.*

**7. Election of the Vice-Chairman who shall become the Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely**

Cllr Hobbs was pleased to propose Cllr Burton as the Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor of Ely. Will had been a councillor for four years and had taken an active role in many aspects of Council life. Will was no stranger to Ely, visiting constantly with his late wife, Heather, when mooring their boat in Ely. On his first visit to Ely he stated this was the place he would like to retire to, and several years later, his wish was granted. He had seen Will's great passion for the City and it gave him great pleasure to propose Cllr Burton to the position of Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Bradney seconded Cllr Hobbs' proposal. Will is a conscientious councillor and he had every confidence he would be a first class Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely Council.

By unanimous agreement, Cllr Burton was duly elected as Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor. He read the Declaration of Office and was invested with the Chain of Office. However, he would not sign the Declaration of Office until the next morning.

Cllr Burton thanked the Mayor and his fellow councillors for electing him to this position. He promised to uphold standards to the best of his ability.

*The Deputy Consort was then invested with the Beckett Brooch.*

**8. Committees, representatives to other organisations, school governors and trustees to Ely Museum**

Appointments as detailed separately, proposed by Cllr Griffin-Singh and seconded by Cllr Eden were unanimously approved.

**9. Authorisation of Signatories**

Signatories as detailed below, proposed by Cllr Overall and seconded by Cllr Chaplin were unanimously approved.

Barclays Bank account – any two of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Cllr Hobbs.

Cambridge Building Society accounts – any two members of the Administration Committee.

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