



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
SESSIONS HOUSE
LYNN ROAD
ELY
CAMBS CB7 4EG

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING & MAYOR MAKING
HELD AT 7.30 PM ON MONDAY, 13TH MAY 2019
AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY

PRESENT:

The Mayor, Cllr M Rouse	Cllr E Every	Cllr I Lindsay
Cllr C Phillips	Cllr A Arnold	Cllr D Warman
Cllr M Downey	Cllr S Bellow	Cllr E Carlsson Browne
Cllr R Morgan	Cllr C Whelan	Cllr A Whelan
Cllr K Wilkins	Cllr R Denness	Cllr S Austen

The Mayor changed the agenda so item 1 would be taken immediately before item 5.

1. 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 for the ensuing year 2018/2019

Cllr A Whelan proposed Councillor Mike Rouse to continue in the position of The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ely. She thanked Alison Arnold for all her hard work for this Council and commiserated with her for the situation she was in and not being able to take up this position. She felt it had been one of the fastest years she had known and hoped that Cllr Rouse would be prepared to do it all again. Cllr Lindsay seconded Cllr A Whelan's proposal.

Cllr Rouse and the Clerk left the hall and entered the robing room. Cllr Rouse was invested with the robes and the Chain of Office. The Clerk then announced the new Mayor and Cllr Rouse and the Clerk re-entered the hall.

2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr D Warman; Mrs S Freestone, Mayor of Chatteris; Mayor of Downham Market; The High Sheriff, Mr N McKittrick; Mayor of Peterborough; Chairman of Huntingdon District Council; Mr R Bradney; RAFA; Mayor of Sandy; Mayor of King's Lynn; Mrs A Broadhurst; Mayor of Ramsey; Mayor of March; Mr E Miller, Station Commander Cambs Fire; Mr D Godsmark; Mayor of Godmanchester; Ms S Lindsell; Mayor of Thetford; Mr P Sindall and the Chairman of Fenland District Council.

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3. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2018/2019

Cllr Rouse said this had been one of the quickest years to go by that he could remember – perhaps it was because of his age, or perhaps it was because he had been busy. He thought privately that all being well, he might have been able to attend between 250 and 300 engagements. In the event the number had been 280, which did not include about 50 Council meetings of all sorts, not to mention the regular visits to the Council offices to check agendas, minutes and sign cheques and documents.

He said that being Mayor of the City in which you were born was the greatest honour that could be bestowed upon anyone. He had really enjoyed meeting so many clubs, organisations and people in Ely this past year. He had enjoyed representing the City and welcoming visitors to Ely, including, of course, Prince Charles, back in November.

Remembrance Sunday had been very special last year – a piper at Dawn outside the cathedral, a packed service in the Cathedral, a huge crowd for the Royal British Legion commemoration on the Market Place and the lighting of the Peace beacon on St Mary's Green in the evening. One thing he was particularly proud of, is that thanks to the skill of Richard Delahaye, the Estates Manager and the Estates Team, we now have a permanent beacon on St Mary's Green. That, if nothing else, will save hours of debate on where we can put a beacon the next occasion on which we need one and I think it looks great and is really in the right place outside our lovely parish church.

He was pleased to hold the Civic Service in St Mary's Church and he thanked his Chaplain, the Rev Michael Banyard and St Mary's Church Vicar, the Rev Chris Hill for conducting the service. It was the church in which his parents were married, in which he was christened, went to Sunday School, was confirmed in and married – so it holds many memories for him.

He had maintained strong links with the Dean of Ely and the Cathedral. The spiritual life of the City and to maintain strong links will all the churches was important to him. He took part in the churches together Walk of Witness on Good Friday and had been pleased to accept invitations from the Muslim community to join them in prayer and celebrate Eid.

He welcomed visitors from the sister City, Ribe and he thanked the Ribe Committee for all their work during the year to keep the friendship so active. The Mayoress and himself had enjoyed some fun days – Aquafest, the Pride Day, Applefest, the KD pantomime, the Council dinner, the fantastic Christmas Lights switch on and the lovely lights themselves, the Charity dinner & entertainment for Pos+Ability and most recently the fabulous Eel Day Parade. Lots of happy memories to share and photographs to look back on.

He had taken a different view to the Mayor's charity this year, agreeing he would support any club or organisation that wanted to raise money. This had meant that he had been able to help the Royal British Legion, RAFA, the Ely Food Bank. He thanked Mark and Teresa Harrison and Pos+Ability who had raised £850 at the Council dinner, through their raffle.

He had been asked if the Mayor would talk to visiting groups of foreign students in the Sessions House. There were several such groups, mainly Chinese students, who were incredibly polite considering he doubted whether they really understood much of what he was saying (but then I'm used to that) and he charged them for the pleasure. That meant he had a sum of money in the Mayor's Charity account which he now wished to give out as small donations, bearing in mind that there is also

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3. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2018/2019 continued

a Council's grants scheme that makes larger donations and these were distributed after the Civic Service.

The Mayor handed out personal donations from the Mayor's charity to Ely St John Ambulance, who supported the Civic Service in such numbers with their cadets and he gave them the proceeds of the collection, £350 for their defibrillator fund raising and general funds.

On Saturday evening there was a charity film show organised by Jack Waterfall and David Martin, showing the film of the Heligoland 39 service held in the cathedral last December. The Battle of Heligoland Bight was the first major air battle of World War 2 and resulted in tragic loss of life with heavy British casualties. The connexion with Ely is, of course, that there were so many World War 2 air bases around here and the Cathedral holds a memorial to those groups of Bomber Command, we also had the Royal Air Force Hospital opening here in 1940 and the Bishop's Palace was used as a convalescent Home by the Red Cross. He was pleased to support Jack's work, which is ongoing and he presented him with a cheque for £300 to pay for some of the hospitality extended to families of the aircrew concerned.

This year he had become aware of two groups, both connected with dogs and their importance in human welfare. There are the wonderful therapy dogs and he invited Elena to accept a small cheque to help with their work.

The second dog friendly organisation was the K9 Cafe and they have a project this summer involving writing about the importance of dogs to people and he presented a small cheque to help with this and her work.

Two further awards for young people that he wished to support were the wonderful Ely Air Cadets – Emily Pieters who has launched a fund to help her achieve her Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award. He had met Emily on several occasions and was delighted to help her try and achieve her goal of the gold award, which he was sure she would.

The second individual award was to a very talented actor, singer, who had the chance to go on a two weeks residential course with the National Youth Theatre this summer. He had seen Zack Wymer in several shows and knew musical theatre was his passion and he was delighted to be able to give him some support in realising his dreams. He thanked them all and wished them all every success.

During the course of the year the Council lost one of its great servants – Cllr John Yates, a former Mayor and someone who brought great experience and wisdom to our meetings. It is the intention, in co-operation with John's family, to install a suitable memorial for John in the coming months. The Council had also lost one of the more recently elected members, Cllr Jo Pearson, who left the area.

It was known before the elections that Cllr Lansell and Cllr Peter Moakes would not be seeking re-election after four years' service and he had thanked them at the last Full Council meeting. He had also paid tribute to one of the longer serving members and twice former Mayor, Cllr Sheila Friend-Smith, who was also retiring from the Council, but is still very active with other things, including the forthcoming Isle of Ely Festival. Sheila was always fair and considered in her judgement and with her husband, Jeremy, were real community stalwarts.

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3. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2018/2019 continued

The election had brought several new faces onto the Council and he looked forward to working with Councillors Arnie Arnold, Sarah Bellow, Edward Carlson Brown, Rebecca Denness, Matthew Downey, Richard Morgan and Kevin Wilkins and he hope they enjoyed their time serving our City.

The same election had also seen the Mayor Elect, Alison Arnold not being returned. Something that he was personally sorry for, as Alison has been a hard-working councillor, especially with Ely in Bloom and the Christmas lights and fully deserved her chance to serve as Mayor. He thanked her for her support to him, whilst she was Deputy Mayor. He hoped that she would be able to continue as a co-opted member on the Ely in Bloom Working Group and Christmas Lights Committee.

He said he had been the father of the Council now since 1978 and over those years had seen many outstanding councillors come and go and at this recent election, one of these great servants of the City was Cllr Richard Hobbs. Like himself, his father and grandfather had been a councillor and this was in his blood. Four times Mayor, supported by Pat his wife, as well as being a District Councillor – a tireless worker for Ely, totally dedicated for getting what he believed was best for the community. Although it is a district facility, but without Cllr Hobbs, he had no doubt, the City would not have got the new Hive Leisure centre or indeed the cinema and leisure village, which has transformed the lives for so many people and families in Ely and the villages around. His is a lasting legacy and he would miss his formidable presence at Committees and his great desire to do things right, but most of all he would miss the chats, seeking his advice (and sometimes ignoring it), but most of all knowing he was there helping and supporting in the things the Council were doing. He thanked Richard and Pat.

As outgoing Mayor, he thanked the Clerk, Tracey Coulson; Sarah Jay and Marianne Pickering in the Council office for their support. Marianne had had the unenviable task of trying to organise his diary and reply to invitations and keep track of him, which she had done in her own inimitable way. He also thanked all the Estates team, the team at the Maltings and those at Oliver Cromwell House and Visit Ely. The Council had successfully re-launched Oliver Cromwell House with Lord Spencer. He was convinced that it had been the right decision to take over this service from ECDC and hope to see even more benefits to the City over the coming years.

He thanked Avril Hayter-Smith, the Town Crier and Graham her loyal Keeper of the bell. One of the best things the Council did was to appoint a Town Crier and Avril had been superb over some 15 years. Rightly honoured last year by being made a Freeman of the City. He thanked her for the manner in which she had supported him this year and for another marvellous Town Crier's competition on Eel Day, which adds greatly to the colour and joy of the day.

He also paid tribute to the City of Ely Military Band. He had attended two wonderful concerts during the year and under Phil Green's direction, supported by Laurine, and with their secretary Malcolm Fletcher, like the Band also honoured recently with the Freedom of the City, they add so much to the life of the City.

He thanked the Ely Standard for being a truly local paper and reporting so fairly on the community, genuinely reflecting what a vibrant and inclusive City Ely is. To Spotted in Ely for all that they do to publicise events and run stories, not forgetting finding lost cats and dogs, on their website. Thanks also went to Elyi, which is an invaluable and lively way of keeping the community informed about everything that is happening – and there is a lot always happening. Thanks also go to Fenprobe and all that they do to keep the blind and visually impaired citizens informed of local news. If asked if people knew of someone who would benefit from this service, to let them, or the Council know.

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He thanked his younger daughter, Cassie for all her support as Mayoress. It was a big ask of her, but she had carried out her duties with great charm, as well as making sure his chain was on and he looked as presentable as possible, which is no easy task. He also thanked all his family: Max and Phil and my other children Ben, Lauren and Lee for their encouragement, and support.

Cllr Rouse said that about a month ago he had written his 'farewell to local politics' speech. (ever the optimist before an election). It had begun 'My late father was an Ely Urban District Councillor and from about the age of 15 our family life was centred around local politics. My great uncle was also a District councillor and his father, my great grandfather before him, so that takes the family service to the community of Ely back some 90 years.

He was elected to the Urban District Council in 1970, subsequently to the successor East Cambs District Council, while retaining his seat on the City Council in 1973, and had done so ever since. He served his first term as Mayor from 1976-7. He said that local politics has been his obsession, or rather trying to do what is best for Ely, has been his obsession.'

Party politics had played an increasing part in local politics over those years. Perhaps inevitably as Ely had doubled in size in that time and so few people know each other, so they vote for the party, not so much the candidate. He was sure though that everyone elected to this Parish Council had at his or her heart the well-being of this parish, that is the only thing that really matters.

Doing the best for Ely continues to be his 'obsession'. He had been honoured to serve as the Mayor and thanked everyone for their generous welcome and involving them in their events. Cassie and him will leave with many happy memories.

4. Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor

Cllr Every said she was absolutely delighted to give the vote of thanks to Mike Rouse, who had been the Mayor for this past year. The role of the Mayor is very complex, as it involves being Chair of the City of Ely Council, attending civic and community functions as the first Citizen, and supporting all the local communities and organisations who request his presence at their events. It requires energy and dedication to manage the Council's affairs and the other 14 councillors who have been elected as individuals to serve the residents of Ely. Many will not have realised that Mike, despite struggling with some ill health and personal issues, had missed no meetings, and as you have heard, attended a huge number of community and civic events during the year. Our thanks also to his Mayoress and daughter, Cassie, who had attended many of them and been a brilliant advocate for young people.

Ladies and gentlemen: Mike Rouse is Ely. He and his own family were born here, as were his father and grandfather before him. He is the longest serving member of the Council, having first been elected when the City Council was formed in 1974. He first served as Mayor from 1976-1977. Not only has he been our councillor for all those years, but he has taught many of the residents of Ely and Soham and is our local historian. If you want to know anything about Ely, you ask Mike and he has probably written a book about it! Despite being steeped in its history, Mike has initiated and supported positive change for the residents, understanding the local needs and actively pursuing practical solutions, which move us forward towards our new Ely Vision without losing our values, heritage and community feel.

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He had brought huge experience to the role and had been inclusive, collaborative and forward thinking. Under his leadership, the positive and welcome views of the 14 individual councillors who have different skills and experience, had enriched the work of the Council as it had worked together through issues and challenges. The value of this cannot be underestimated.

She thanked him for his leadership, guidance, sensitivity and good humour over the year. His skilful chairing of meetings had moved the Council forward in this time of change. For the City's residents and community, all were really grateful for the time and interest he had shown in their various organisations, raising their profile and truly acting in the role of the first Citizen.

5. Reading and Signing of the Declaration of Office and Swearing the Oath of Allegiance by the Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ely

Cllr Rouse read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. He then swore the Oath of Allegiance.

6. Statement of Acceptance of Office by the Newly Elected the Right Worshipful Mayor of the City of Ely

The newly elected Mayor said that amongst the many outcomes of the election, he had considered what would happen if sadly the Mayor Elect was not returned to the Council. He thanked his fellow councillors for entrusting him with a further year in office and the opportunities it brings.

He hoped the Council would be undertaking a review of its structure to allow the Mayor to concentrate more on the Mayoral role and less on the business and Committee side of the Council's work and to work with Visit Ely on promoting small shops and businesses within the City.

He said when he was young, he loved sport. He played cricket for Ely and later he captained Ely men's Team at tennis. He played Rugby for Ely (in the early days when it was difficult to find 15 players). Due to this he wanted to support and promote being active, in all manner of sport, for the physical and mental well-being, for young people particularly, but also people of all ages. He suggested the proposed skate park could get sorted out this year. His daughter, Cassie wished to stand down as Mayoress, but he is extremely fortunate that he has two daughters and her older sister, Lauren, had kindly accepted the challenge of supporting him as Mayoress.

Lauren was a past winner of the Ely Standard Young Sports Woman of the Year. She has played football at the highest level for her age and is now playing with Cambridge United Women in the development squad. He knew that she would help with promoting health and well-being through sport.

He confirmed that he would continue to help any local charity or organisation to raise money for their cause.

He said that the Revd Michael Banyard had been a superb Chaplain and he was delighted that he will be his Chaplain again for this coming year.

He said it was an honour to serve the City and felt that together, everyone could make it an even better year for Ely.

The Mayoress, Miss Lauren Rouse was invested with the Chain of Office

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

Cllr Rouse proposed Cllr Sue Austen as the Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor for the City of Ely. He said that last year she had suffered with ill health, but had now returned to the Council to undertake her duties as a councillor. He was delighted to bestow upon her this honour. Cllr C Whelan seconded Cllr Rouse’s proposal. By unanimous agreement, Cllr Austen was duly elected as Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor. She read and signed the Declaration of Office and was invested with the Chain of Office.

Cllr Austen thanked councillors for this opportunity and said she was very humble to accept.

8. Committees and representatives to other organisations

This was deferred to the next Full Council. The Mayor allowed Cllr A Whelan to propose the Council establish a Working Group to consider reform of the Mayor’s role and other changes to the Standing Orders. They would aim to bring initial proposals to the June Full Council meeting. She also proposed that this Working Group, which had already been established, but some of the members were now no longer councillors, have a membership of Cllr Phillips, Cllr Lindsay, Cllr C Whelan, Cllr Carlsson Browne and Cllr Wilkins. This proposal was seconded by Cllr Wilkins and unanimously agreed.

9. Authorisation of Signatories

Signatories as detailed below, were proposed by Cllr Rouse and seconded by Cllr C Whelan and were unanimously approved.

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

Cambridge Building Society accounts – any two of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Lindsay and Cllr Every.

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