

## Town Mayors Annual Report

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as Mayor of Ellesmere for the last year and to represent the town at various functions across the county. I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their help and support during the year.

During this period, together we have continued to work towards improving communication and accessibility with the residents and businesses in the town.

With the support of my fellow councillors some of the things we have implemented and are working on are:

- We have agreed to recognise the climate emergency and committed to become a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030, and to set up a working group. We also agreed to sign the Tree Charter.
- The Vision for Ellesmere working group held a very successful workshop at the end of January with invited people from local businesses and community groups, to accommodate the number of participants, this was held over two nights. These two workshops generated numerous ideas, which the working group are going through now to try to move some of the ideas forward.
- The Council appointed a Youth member, myself and the youth member visited all the youth organisations and schools in Ellesmere to explain the workings of the town council, with a view to involving them in any decisions that may impact them.
- The Town Councils finances continue to remain in a healthy position. In continuing to keep under review the changing demands on its finances for future years the town council agreed to a 4% increase in the Council Tax precept – equivalent to an additional 11.5 pence per week for a Band D property.

The country was then hit with the Coronavirus, however, just before the full Lockdown a meeting was held at the Town Hall with interested community and Faith groups, this resulted in a Local Community Support Group being set up with a Facebook page and website all coordinated by the Town Council, with over 60 Volunteers. With over 80 clients, volunteers collected prescriptions and shopping for the vulnerable. The coordination of this was done by Town Clerk Jo Butterworth and her assistant Jean Hynes, which they undertook as well as their normal day to day work. With a ban on gatherings of more than two people all the Town Hall bookings were cancelled, we also had to Furlough all the caretaking/cleaning staff. The government banned all face to face council meetings and postponed all local and elected city Mayors elections, and council elections until 2021. As I write this the country is still in the Coronavirus pandemic, however, we are assured by the Government that the curve is being flattened and the R number is under 1. As a result, the lockdown is being relaxed and more nonessential shops are being allowed to open. Fingers crossed we will not get a second wave.

The result of not being able to hold our annual meeting, meant that I would carry on as Mayor and Cllr Anne Wignall as Deputy Mayor until the next annual meeting in May 2021.

I would like to record my grateful thanks to the Town Clerk Jo who keeps me on the straight narrow, and reins me in when I get carried away, and to Assistant Clerks Phil and Jean (our newest member of the team) as they have kept the Town Council running efficiently, via Zoom meetings and email, plus coordinating our volunteers.

I would like to say how proud I am of the way the local businesses in Ellesmere have supported the town, with shops delivering to shielding residents, and Pubs becoming takeaways and delivering to shielding residents. Also, I would like to thank the town hall Ellesmere Covid 19 support group volunteers for the amazing job they have done in supporting the shielding vulnerable residents. And if you enjoyed being volunteers, when we get back to some form of normality, the town council will be looking for some community volunteers. Please speak to Jo Butterworth about this.

Cllr Paul Goulbourne  
June 17 2020