

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF KNARESBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL**

**PRESENT: The Town Mayor** (M Longhurst) in the Chair

**Councillors:** J Batt, A Bell, D Goode, H Gostlow, K Lacey, J Pickard, M Walker and H Westmancoat

**Staff:** The Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Community Projects Officer

**AM25/001    ITEM 1 – ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR 2025/2026**

**1.1** The Town Mayor (M Longhurst) asked for nominations for the election of Mayor for the ensuing year.

Councillor Andy Bell proposed, and Councillor Hannah Gostlow seconded, and it was

**RESOLVED:** Councillor Helen Westmancoat be elected Town Mayor for the ensuing year 2025/26.

**AM25/002    ITEM 2 – APOLOGIES FOR INABILITY TO ATTEND THE MEETING**

Apologies and reasons for absence were received and accepted from Councillors K Davies, M Flood and S Oakes.

**AM25/003**    **ITEM 3 – WELCOME BY THE RETIRING MAYOR –**  
**Councillor M Longhurst: REPORT ON THE MAYORAL YEAR 2024/25**  
and presentation of awards

Councillor Longhurst, the outgoing Mayor, welcomed all present and thanked guests for attending such a special occasion, giving her the opportunity to say her goodbyes and to welcome the incoming Mayor, Councillor Helen Westmancoat.

She went on to say that it had been an honour and a privilege to be mayor and that she had enjoyed visiting many new places, such as Bebra in Germany for Town Twinning celebrations. She had met people of all age groups ranging from the children at a local primary school to the senior citizens at the Friendship and Leisure Centre.

She went on to recall taking part in many events, with perhaps the most special one being the celebration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE day as this had special personal memories for her family.

The mentioned that during her year the most important development for her personally was the opportunity to set up the Mayor of Knaresborough's Town Guides programme which will provide free walking tours for the town. She explained that as a qualified history teacher, and Chair of the Association of Yorkshire Blue Badge Guides, she had

long desired to promote what she felt to be the unsung history and heritage of the town. She also wanted to welcome newcomers to the town and give support to local businesses and the market. She was grateful that her fellow councillors had been good enough to vote in favour of the project, that the Clerks had supported her with advice (and a lot of extra hard work) and her husband and Consort had also been very supportive. She spoke about Knaresborough's reputation for its community spirit and that she had felt humbled to note the goodwill shown by local people and organisations which had provided lectures, tours, and visits for the guides whilst in training. She encouraged all to take part in one of the new free tours which will start at 11.00 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays and last approximately one hour.

As one of her main fund raisers, Margy had organised a Medieval Family Fun Day, and she presented imitation cheques totalling £1155 to her charities for the year – Knaresborough Museum Association and The Chapel of our Lady of the Crag.

She again thanked all for their support in her mayoral year and went on to present some 'well-deserved' awards as follows:

1. The Environmental Cup was presented to Knaresborough Forest Park in recognition of their efforts to provide a nature reserve and a place for local people to visit and enjoy.
2. The Community Cup was presented to Knaresborough Museum Association for their hard work in building up a community museum over the years.
3. There were Mayoral Award Certificates for Andrew and Christine Willoughby in recognition of their constant work in supporting town council events and also to Craft and Social for their support in providing 'paddles' for the Tour Guides and a silhouette for VE Day 80.
4. She referred to several Special Arts Awards which had also been given out, funded by a donation received by town council in recognition of the help provided by the Clerk whilst they were filming in the town in January.

#### **AM25/004    ITEM 4 – Invest the Incoming Mayor**

The outgoing Mayor, Councillor Margy Longhurst, invested Councillor Helen Westmancoat with the Chain of Office.

The new Town Mayor, Councillor Helen Westmancoat, took the Chair henceforth.

#### **AM25/005    ITEM 5 - Town Mayor's Declaration of Acceptance of Office and appointment of Deputy Town Mayor**

**5.1** Councillor Helen Westmancoat read out and signed the declaration of acceptance of office of Town Mayor.

**5.2** The Mayor gave a vote of thanks to the outgoing Mayor and thanked Members for her appointment.

**5.3** The Mayor announced that her Consort is to be Mr John Westmancoat and the retiring Consort, Mr Richard Hassall, invested the new Consort with the Chain of Office.

**5.4** The Town Mayor (Councillor Helen Westmancoat) proposed, and Councillor Hannah Gostlow seconded, and it was

**RESOLVED:** That Councillor Andy Bell is Deputy Mayor for the year 2025/2026.

**AM25/006    ITEM 6 – To receive communications from the Town Mayor, including:**

The Mayor's Chaplain for the Civic Year 2025/26 – Father Gerard Kearney  
Mayor's Charities for the Civic Year 2025/26 – Knaresborough Youth Council and  
Scriven Scout Group  
Date of Civic Service – to be advised

Members of the Council and invited guests then processed to the Committee Room to be received by the mayoral party.