

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook

Mayor of Newbury

2016 – 17



Official Record of Year in Office
15 May 2016 - 14 May 2017

Date of Mayor Making: 15 May 2016

Deputy Mayor: Cllr David Fenn

Mayoress: Tessa Olson

Civic Manager: Joyce Lewis

Civic Staff:

Mayor's Attendant : Ian Campbell

Town Crier : Brian Sylvester

Town Marshal : Dave Stubbs

Mace Bearer : Rod Thomason

Mace Bearer : Barry Digby

Mace Bearer : Garry Poulson

Mayor's Chosen Charities:

The Mayor's Benevolent Fund

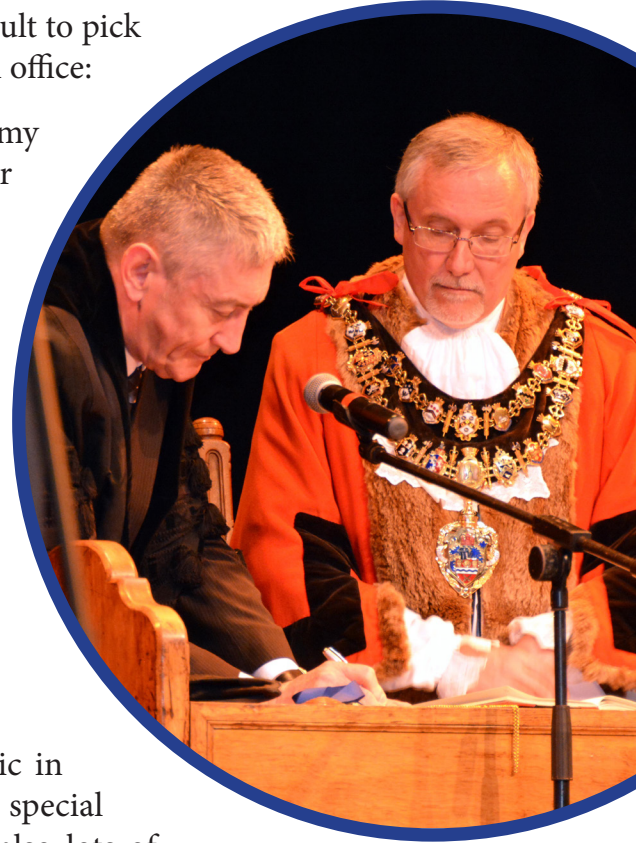
West Berkshire Mencap

A Taste of the Civic Year 2016/17

It has been a huge privilege representing the people of Newbury on so many occasions over the past year and a great pleasure to meet so many of our residents, confirming my view that this is a great town in which to live and work.

Every event attended is a highlight in its own right, so it is difficult to pick out individual events for mention. This is a flavour of my year in office:

- The year started with the Mayor Making ceremony at which my family and friends were able to view this historic tradition of our town and featured music by 3p Suite, an award winning close harmony Acappella trio. As usual, this was followed by the Civic Service which was very personal.
- Bayer 10k Charity Run. This involved hundreds of local people running to raise funds for charity, including young people who had their own shorter race.
- It was a particular joy to open the wheelchair friendly swing and the new Splash Park in Victoria Park. I also presented prizes for the relaunched 'Newbury in Bloom'.
- I opened a number of new businesses in the town including Newbury Emporium and the refurbished Brummel Road Store.
- It was a pleasure to attend The Queen's 90th Birthday Picnic in the Park event where our local 90 year olds were given a very special afternoon with entertainment and afternoon tea. There were also lots of traditional stall games for everyone to enjoy.



- It was a great honour to take the salute at Armed Forces and Remembrance Sunday parades, a very moving experience.



- The Mayor's Drive & Tea Party is an annual event that this community should be proud of. It was my great pleasure to host last year's event which is always held on the first Wednesday of July. What a wonderful time everyone had in the grounds of Oak Ash, Leckhampstead. I thoroughly enjoy meeting and greeting my over 75 year old guests and doing my best to chat to them all and of course the volunteer drivers and the huge number of other volunteers.
- I felt privileged to lead the Centenary commemorations of the First World War in Newbury including The Battle of the Somme 12 hour vigil and service, the Talks which took place in the Town Hall and the Exhibition around Remembrance Sunday.



- It was a pleasure to meet our twin and linked town visitors during the Twin Town Reunion held in Newbury when the Newbury Twin Town Association hosted eighty or more visitors to our town and arranged a programme including meetings, visits, meals and walks. A long weekend of getting to know our visitors and them getting to know our beautiful town.

- I had the honour of welcoming school children from Eeklo our Belgian twin town into the Town Hall when they visited Newbury and met many of our own school children in the Town Hall during Local Democracy week.

- I have attended a number of events at Newbury College, in addition to visiting Secondary and Primary Schools to watch performances, view Art Exhibitions, and attend presentation events and more.

- Meeting more members of our community whilst attending events and AGMs at many societies, charities, support groups and clubs. I have also enjoyed many concerts and performances arranged by the rich array of performing arts groups we are lucky to have in our town.

- No mayoral year could be complete without a mention of the Michaelmas Fair when I tried a number of the rides with many of the younger members of our community.

- For my Civic Carol Service, I joined forces with West Berkshire Mencap and the service proved to be a great success, as did the Race Day and the Murder, Mystery Ball that I attended to raise funds for this very worthy charity.

- As Mayor, I chair the meetings of the Town Council, which met on 5 occasions this year since I was elected at last year's Annual Meeting.

(copies of my reports to each meeting are appended)



Newbury Town Council passed a formal Vote of Thanks to

Councillor Julian Swift-Hook

on behalf of the people of Newbury in recognition of his

Year in Office as Town Mayor

15 May 2016 to 14 May 2017.

Present when the Seal of
Newbury Town Council
was affixed

Leader of the Council, Adrian Edwards

CEO of Newbury Town Council, Hugh Peacocke

Dated: 14 May 2017

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

27 June 2016

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

In the six weeks since the last Full Council meeting on 15 May 2016 (which was Mayor Making) my Mayoress and I have attended a total of 29 events on your behalf:

17/05/2016 - Unveiling of wheelchair swing in Victoria Park for NTC
18/05/2016 - NTTA meeting
19/05/2016 - Volunteer centre Befriending Scheme launch
21/05/2016 – Newbury Spring Festival closing concert at St Nicolas Church
22/05/2016 - Opening of Newbury Emporium
24/05/2016 - St Nics C.E. Junior School - NACE Award and talk by Ed (34 marathons)
27/05/2016 - Opening of Splash Park in Victoria Park
27/05/2016 - Press launch of Truckfest South
28/05/2016 - Opened Truckfest South
29/05/2016 - Gave out Awards at Truckfest South
29/05/2016 - Bayer 10k (started races, gave out medals and awards)
02/06/2016 - High Sheriff Summer Reception
03/06/2016 - Reception for Sir Peter Michael (unveiling of Newbury Coat picture)
04/06/2016 - Coffee Morning in aid of Eight Bells for Mental Health
07/06/2016 - West Berks Hospital QE90 Garden Party
10/06/2016 - WBC Schools Cake Competition at Newbury College
11/06/2016 - National Federation of Cemetery Friends AGM @ Phoenix Centre
12/06/2016 - Picnic in the Park for Her Majesty's 90th birthday.
15/06/2016 - Time to Talk AGM
17/06/2016 - Received Lord Lieutenant James Puxley at Kennet Radio
18/06/2016 - Coffee morning in aid of 2nd Newbury Scouts
18/06/2016 – Opened Priory Road Street party – (“a Space Jollity”).
19/06/2016 - WBC Duke of Edinburgh Awards at St Barts School
23/06/2016 - St Joseph's School 50th Anniversary buffet
23/06/2016 - Trinity School House Speaking Competition
24/06/2016 - Fairclose Day Centre Afternoon Tea to celebrate Her Majesty's 90th birthday.
25/06/2016 - AFC Newbury Boys and Girls Presentation Day
26/06/2016 - Armed Forces Day parade and Service
26/06/2016 - Lions Club of Newbury Charter Dinner

I won't list them all right now - not least because I don't want to send you all to sleep with a long list! - but there are a few highlights that I would like to mention.

Several of the events have involved students from primary and secondary schools, such as the Duke of Edinburgh awards and the National Association for Able Children in Education award to St Nicolas CE Junior School. It has been particularly inspiring for me to see first hand the amazing achievements of our next generations of Newbury citizens.

I'm delighted that Newbury Town Council has been able to augment the public facilities in Victoria Park with new play equipment, and it has been a particular pleasure to see the splash park being used.

Other highlights include opening TruckFest South by being driven around the showground arena on a monster truck, which was a lot of fun but slightly scary, too! The Armed Forces Day parade and service held last Sunday in the Market Place was a particularly dignified and moving ceremony – my thanks to all the councillors who supported the event.

Looking ahead, the mayor's diary for the next few weeks continues to be very full. One important event worthy of mention is next Thursday, 1st July, when we will be holding a 12 hour vigil to commemorate the start of the Battle of the Somme 100 years ago.

If you are able to support the event by taking part in the vigil for an hour at some stage during the day, that would be very helpful and I'm sure Joyce would be pleased to hear from you. Finally, looking ahead to the rest of this meeting and future full council meetings, let me assure you that I will of course be evenhanded in my chairing of our meetings but I will not let members speak out of turn or breach Standing Orders.

Standing Orders are very clear that each member may speak only once on any matter, and for a limited time. Generally speaking we have always been reasonably relaxed regarding that particular provision in our Standing Orders, and I see no reason to change that flexibility significantly, but I would like to see debates making progress rather than getting stuck on granular points.

So with this in mind, I would please ask you all to think about all of the points you want to make in each debate, make them all in your first speech. The Proposer of each motion does have a Right of Reply at the end of the debate and before the motion is put, but that Right of Reply does not extend to every member, and it is not a valid "point of order" to query or disagree with something that another member has just said.

Thank you very much, and I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Julian Swift-Hook
Mayor of Newbury
27th June 2016

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

31 October 2016

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

In the four months since the last Full Council meeting on 27th June 2016 my Mayoress and I have attended a total of 70 events on your behalf.

Aside from the regular Saturday morning coffee mornings, there have been openings and unveilings, official dinners, fundraising events, fetes, formal church services, and the funeral of a former Mayor of Newbury.

I won't subject you all to a detailed report of every event, but there are a few things that I think are worthy of specific mention.

I would like to start by paying tribute to Chris Hall, a respected artist and a former Mayor of Newbury who died at the age of 85 and whose funeral I attended a couple of months ago.

Former Councillor Hall lived in this area for most of his life and gained a formidable reputation both as a talented oil painter and a keen political activist.

After completing his national service in Malaya in the late 1940s, he studied at the Slade School of Art in London during the 1950s, before returning to live in Newbury.

He was elected to the prestigious Royal Society of British Artists in 1988 and the Royal Cambrian Academy in 1994, and he maintained a passion for his art right up until his death, with his latest exhibition opening at The Gallery in London just days after he died.

As well as being known for his art, Chris also developed a reputation in local politics, representing the then Liberal Party on the former Newbury Borough and Newbury District councils for several terms and many years.

He served as mayor of Newbury in 1967 to 1968, when he was just 36-yearsold, becoming one of the youngest men to hold the post in the 420-year history of this town's Charter.

As a councillor in the 60s, Chris worked to preserve many of Newbury's old buildings, and he was responsible for the planting of the avenue of poplar trees at Stroud Green.

He was a staunch local campaigner, always ready to put shoe leather in service of his principles. Known for his dry humour and sound advice, he has been a huge support to many who have followed in his footsteps

as councillors and candidates here in the Newbury area. I am one of many who has benefitted from his wise counsel and relentless campaigning, and I am proud to have known him.

Chris will be missed, and our thoughts are with his wife, Maria, and his family.

[One Minute Silence]

In his later years, Chris often worried about how to get younger people more interested and active in politics.

I know that he very much approved of the Town Council's now annual activities supporting Local Democracy Week, and it was a particular pleasure for me to be able to attend nine of the presentations that took place here in the Council Chamber to groups of young students from local schools. There were some very interesting questions asked, by both the students and their teachers.

We'll be hearing a detailed report later on in the meeting from the Chair of the Local Democracy Week Working Group, so I won't say too much, but it was wonderful to see so many youngsters taking an interest in what we do. Who knows, among them may very well be some of the Newbury Town Councillors of the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks on behalf of you all to the Working Group, to the officers who supported it, and to Councillors Margo Payne, Jo Day and Martha Vickers in particular for their hard work and dedication. I know that many councillors supported several of the presentations as well, so thank you for that support, too.

All in all, another success of which Team Newbury Town Council can be justifiably proud.

Of all of the many other events that I have attended on your behalf in the last four months, all of which have been interesting and enjoyable in different ways, there is one more that I would like to pick out for special mention.

The Porch in Speen goes by the uninspiring label of Pupil Referral Unit. This is the place where challenging students between the ages of 14 and 19 go when mainstream education is unable to support them.

I was invited to attend Afternoon Tea at The Porch a couple of weeks ago, to mark the end of their celebration of British Values Week, which coincided with our own Local Democracy activities.

I confess to some apprehension before going, but it was an incredibly encouraging and inspiring visit. The students' work that was displayed throughout the building was of a very high standard, and the students themselves made me feel very welcome. There is so much talent among the students there, and seeing the dedication and caring of the staff who guide and help the students to fulfil their potential was truly inspiring.

On one of the walls was displayed a short poem written by students Ewan Greening and Hannah Crossey during The Porch's British Values Week last year (2015).

The poem had a huge impact on me. I would like to share it with you.

Oi listen!

I'm so frustrated
So isolated
Feels like I'm always being slated.

Hated.

Everything I do, they say it's wrong
but I'm trying to say strong;
Glass half-full

Trying to... Pull myself through.

People bringing up the past
but I can't move that fast.
I'm trying hard to be free from the bad

Can't you see... It's me... Underneath?
I do feel ashamed; I know I'm to blame.
I'm just trying to change.

Earlier in the week, our MP, Richard Benyon, had hosted a group of students from the Speen and Newtown Road Porch buildings at the Houses of Parliament, and some of the British Values work displayed was based on that theme.

When the Local Democracy Week Working Group is planning its activities for the autumn of 2017, I would urge that The Porch is included in those plans.

For those of you who didn't get to the Murder Mystery Ball a couple of weeks ago, you missed a fabulous event. Everyone was in 1920s dress, trying to solve a mysterious and unexpected murder that had apparently taken place just before we all arrived. It was my pleasure to award Councillor Margo Payne the prize for the Best Dressed Lady of the evening, and I'm pleased to say that the mystery was indeed correctly solved by one table of guest detectives. Those of us who got it wrong were able to console ourselves with the knowledge that during the evening over £4,000 was raised for my charity, West Berkshire Mencap.

Coming up as we head into November, I'm looking forward to attending not one but two Diwali celebrations as Mayor this coming weekend, and I would take this opportunity to remind you all of the Newtown Road Cemetery Welcome Day on Saturday 12th November.

The following day, Sunday 13th December is Newbury's annual Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service, one of the most important civic events of the year. I do hope that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Finally, since we won't meet again as a Full Council before the New Year, may I be the first to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous 2017.

Thank you very much, and I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Julian Swift-Hook
Mayor of Newbury
31st October 2016

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

30 January 2017

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

In the three months since the last Full Council meeting on 31st October 2016, my Mayoress and I have attended a total of 33 events on your behalf, including a variety of interesting Christmas engagements.

You will recall that at the October council meeting last year I reported to you that I had represented the town at the funeral of former Mayor of Newbury Chris Hall. Once again, I have had occasion to perform the same duty, representing Newbury at the funeral of former Mayor Barbara McMahon last week, following her death at the age of 94.

Born in Newbury in 1922, Barbara McMahon lived in Newbury all her life.

She worked as a teacher at Greenham Court School, in my ward of Pyle Hill, a school which is now known as The Willows.

She served as a Newbury district councillor and was elected as mayor in 1983.

Our thoughts are with her family, her two daughters, Louise and Diane, her four grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

The funeral was held last Friday January 27, at her parish church, St Francis de Sales, Wash Common.

The Town Council paid its respects to former councillor McMahon by observing a minute's silence at the start of the Policy and Resources committee meeting on 16 January.

On a more cheerful note, I was privileged to be invited to not one Diwali celebration, but two.

The mega Diwali at Newbury racecourse has become a regular annual feature in the town's social calendar, and as guests of honour, along with other members of the local chain gang, my Mayoress and I enjoyed thoroughly entertaining evening.

The highlight of the evening for me was when the chairman of West Berkshire Council, Councillor Quentin Webb, was invited onto the stage for a brief lesson in Indian dancing. Councillor Webb gave a very good account of himself, and was an excellent sport, though I suspect he would be the 1st to admit that Indian dancing is probably not his strong suit. I believe the video is on Facebook somewhere...

The following day was a different type of Diwali celebration – a smaller family event where the stars of the show were definitely the children of all the families taking part. A fabulous afternoon of colourful singing and dancing, at which my Mayoress and I had a front row seat.

The over 80s parcel fund is another annual entry in the town's civic calendar, in my Mayoress and I were pleased to support it on behalf of the town Council. We particularly enjoyed the parcel packing session at the beginning of December – this involved starting with an empty bag and going around a series of tables, each with a different item, putting one of each item in the bag.

What started as an orderly procession around the tables with one bag at a time quickly turned into a competition with various people seeing how many bags they could manage to fill at once and how quickly they could get round the course and get back to the beginning with a new empty bag.

The occasion was fun and festive, punctuated with bacon butties and much laughter. It was great to see so many different groups of youngsters from local schools, Scouts, guides and so on, all keen to help pack Christmas parcels for the older members of our community.

As usual, December mayoral events involved a lot of carols and a lot of mince pies. Fortunately, I am a great fan of mince pies, so I was very happy to fulfil my mince pie eating obligations to the community. I'm afraid my singing voice for the Christmas carols was not so good.

The civic carol service just before Christmas was a very special event, because it was a joint carol service with my chosen charity, West Berkshire Mencap. Several different scenes from the Nativity story were performed by Mencap clients during the service, which added considerably to everyone's enjoyment of the evening.

The last mayoral event of the calendar year was a visit to West Berkshire community hospital on Christmas morning, to join the Mayor of Thatcham and the patients for a chat and some carol singing.

Having to be in hospital is not a fun thing to do on Christmas day, and although many patients had family members visiting, I'm sure they would all have preferred to have been at home with their families. I'm pleased that we were able to bring a little extra Christmas cheer to their day.

January has been a quiet month for the Mayor of Newbury, but things are getting busy again so I look forward to having more to report to you next time. Thank you very much, and I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Julian Swift-Hook
Mayor of Newbury
30th January 2017

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

10 May 2017

Fellow councillors, ladies and gentlemen...

My previous Mayor's Reports have been relatively brief, so I hope you will indulge me in listening to a slightly longer report tonight, given that this is the last proper Full Council meeting over which I will have the honour to preside as Mayor.

Since my last report to you at the end of January, I have attended 40 events on your behalf, and I have been accompanied by my Mayoress, Tessa Olson, for many of them.

Education and Training

I have attended Newbury College on two occasions in the last three months, and on both occasions I was once again impressed by the range of educational and training opportunities available at our college, to students of all ages.

The first of these events was the opening of the new engineering laboratory, where students are trained how to use state-of-the-art CNC machines for producing complex components to very close tolerances.

And the second was the Annual Apprenticeship Awards, at which the achievements of apprentices from a wide range of disciplines, including engineering, were recognised. The guest speaker was former apprentice David Martin, who is now UKAEA's chief operating officer, working at Culham Science Centre in Abingdon.

The engineering world won many of the awards, but just to prove my point about the wide range of disciplines, the "Best apprentice in a small business" award went to Hannah Benson, who was apprenticed to the Tally Ho pub in Hungerford Newtown, and the "Best workplace mentor" went to Hannah's mentor, Paula Woof, also of the Tally Ho!

Victoria Park

Having presided over this council as Leader during the time when the issues surrounding the damage to Victoria Park were front and centre in our thoughts. I was particularly pleased to be able to formally open the council's fantastic new tennis courts a month ago, marking one of the last stages of the repair and refurbishment of what I have often described as "the jewel in Newbury's crown", Victoria Park.

And with the wonderful new paint scheme for the courts and the surrounding surface, the tennis courts really do look stunning.

There is very little left to do to complete the repairs to the park. The retaining wall adjoining Park Way has been repaired, the railings have been replaced, the paths throughout the park have been repaired, the bowling green has been repaired, and the tennis courts are open.

With only the bowling club green remaining to be formally opened, the work is almost done. Given where we were six years ago, I think this is a momentous achievement by our fantastic Services Team, led by Granville Taylor.

The Arts in Newbury

Musical arts have featured three times in my diary of engagements during the last three months.

My Mayoress and I very much enjoyed Trinity School's performance of "Joseph and his Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat" at the end of March, and a couple of weeks later we enjoyed the Newbury Musical Theatre presentation of "My Fair Lady". Who needs to go to the West End when we have such great performances here in Newbury?

My third musical engagement was just last week when it was my great pleasure to attend the opening concert of the wonderful international Newbury Spring Festival, the biggest music festival of its type in the country, outside the Edinburgh Festival and the BBC Proms.

The Spring Festival is in its 39th year this year, and it is something of which little old Newbury should be immensely proud.

We also attended the Open Studios Insight exhibition last month – the last that will be held in the present New Greenham Arts Centre which is scheduled for demolition later this year.

A new purpose-built arts centre will be constructed to replace it, but the new centre will probably not be open in time for next year's Open Studios exhibition.

My Mayoress and I also attended the 10th birthday party of Newbury Crafters where there were lots of handmade items on display, and a wonderful birthday cake.

Health and wellbeing

A number of the events that my Mayoress and I have attended during the last three months are to do with health and well-being.

Chiropractic Centres

It seems that chiropractic centres in Newbury are like London buses – no new ones for ages, and then two new ones open in a month. I opened the new premises of the Newbury Chiropractic Centre at the beginning of February, and just two weeks later I opened the Spriggs Chiropractic Centre.

Dementia

On a more serious note, dementia is a devastating condition which affects all too many people, particularly, but not exclusively, older people. It is now apparently the leading cause of death in England and Wales.

Two of the events that I have attended in the last three months have been about helping people with dementia, the first of which was the opening of a Memories Café at the Winchcombe Place care home in February. Many of the residents at the care home are dementia sufferers, and the memory boxes that the residents were able to open contained lots of memorabilia from several decades ago to stimulate social interactions around shared memories.

A month later, I took part in the Virtual Dementia Tour, designed to enable people who do not have dementia to experience something of what it is like to be a sufferer.

I can't tell you too much about it because next week is Dementia Awareness Week and I wouldn't want to spoil it for anyone who has the opportunity to experience this Virtual Tour for themselves.

Suffice to say that the degree of sensory disruption was quite disturbing, and the opportunity to talk with the trainer afterwards was very valuable in helping me to make sense of the experience.

If anyone has the opportunity to take this virtual dementia tour, I would strongly recommend it.

Suicide Prevention

And most recently, my Mayoress and I attended the inaugural meeting of a new suicide prevention action group here in the council chamber last week.

It was an incredibly valuable meeting, with all participants saying at the end of it how useful it had been. Great credit to Chief Executive of the Volunteer Centre, Garry Poulson, for organising this meeting and for bringing together so many apparently diverse organisations, all of whom were able to make a valuable contribution.

I think this was a brilliant start to a very worthwhile community project, and I do hope that this Action Group continues and grows.

And finally under the health and well-being heading, last week was Deafness Awareness Week, and it was marked by children from Mary Hare School singing loudly in Northbrook Street, collecting for their cause. It was a pleasure to be part of this amazingly colourful event.

Sport

On a lighter note, another theme running through my mayoral events over the last three months was a sporting one.

I've already mentioned the opening of the tennis courts in Victoria Park, but other sporting engagements included attending the annual West Berks Indoor Bowls Club Crowe Clark Whitehill competition, and getting up ridiculously early one Saturday to help start a leg of the Devizes to Westminster canoe race from Northcroft.

And of course, there was the Soroptimists annual pancake races in February – although I'm not sure that qualifies as a sporting event as such!

Non-political nominations for non-political Mayoral posts

Those of you who attended the last Policy and Resources Committee meeting will recall that I raised the issue of the nomination of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

In all the 20-odd years that I have served as a councillor on this Council, it has been custom and practice for the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor to be non-political.

Indeed, this is enshrined in our current Standing Orders which specify that the Town Mayor is the civic head of the council, not the political head.

This principle is further supported by the protocol and role description for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor which was adopted by this Council on 30 November 2015 and which states that “the position is non-political” and “the Mayor’s role is as the ceremonial head of the town”.

Yet even though the role of Mayor and Deputy Mayor are both clearly considered to be non-political, and have been for as long as I can remember, the process by which the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are nominated is unfortunately still apparently based in political considerations, even after 20 years.

I was told two weeks ago that the nomination process being followed this year is in line with an old Standing Order dating back to March 2006, namely to nominate the Mayor and Deputy Mayor Elect based on the relative size of political groups.

However, I think it’s worth pointing out that this Standing Order had very little support at the time, being passed with just six councillors voting in favour. Half of the 17 councillors present at the time abstained. It was subsequently deleted in December 2008 with what I recall was the unanimous support of all 21 councillors present on that occasion.

So that suggests to me that 10 years ago, Council did not think that such a political consideration was appropriate when nominating councillors to non-political posts.

I find myself wondering what’s changed.

It is without question an honour and a privilege to be Mayor of Newbury, one which I have fully appreciated and thoroughly enjoyed over the past 12 months. And having fulfilled the role for the last year, I am aware now, more than ever, how important Newbury’s Mayor is to the citizens of our wonderful town.

My firm view, therefore, formed with the benefit of 20 years’ experience as a councillor on this Council, and having been Deputy Leader, Leader, Deputy Mayor, and now Mayor, is that going forward, nominations for this honour should be made based first and foremost on the length of time for which nominees have dedicated themselves to the service of the town council.

I hope and trust that this will be addressed as soon as possible in the new civic year with a view to adopting it as council policy, so that the citizens of our town can have confidence that the first citizen is so appointed based only on his or her record of service to the town.

Principle, not personal

Finally on this issue, I would like to make it clear once again that my issue here is purely one of principle.

It is in no way a reflection of my views of the prospective nominee for Deputy Mayor Elect as an individual, a councillor who I have come to hold in particularly high esteem in the short time that it has been my pleasure to know her.

And in anticipation of the outcome of items later on tonight's agenda, I would also like confirm that I will be fully supporting both the Mayor Elect and the Deputy Mayor Elect at Mayor Making on Sunday.

Thank you

Thank you very much once again, councillors, for your support during my mayoral year, both here in the council chamber and at the many events that we have all attended. I am of course happy to answer any questions.

Cllr Julian Swift-Hook
Mayor of Newbury
10th May 2017