

TOWN MAYOR OF DUNSTABLE'S DIARY

MAY 2020

INTRODUCTION

The Mayoral role - A threefold role;

- **Constitutional** – Chairman of the Council - Ex Officio member of the three standing committees
- **Civic** – Link with other Mayors and their events in Central Bedfordshire and other neighbouring authorities; attendance at Remembrance Day; arrange Civic Service
- **Community** – attendance at Town Council events; available for visits to schools, shops, businesses, clubs and societies

HOW DOES ONE BECOME MAYOR?

Usually a longer standing Councillor with some experience of Chairing one of the three standing Committees – Grounds and Environmental Services; Community Services or Finance and General Purposes.

The majority Group will make a recommendation from their number to be put forward at the Annual General Meeting of the Town Council, usually in May. Opposition members may also make a nomination. The full Council then makes the decision.

MY BACKGROUND

I was born at the County War Memorial Hospital in Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire, Wales. I attended school at Wycliffe College in Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. Education continued at Swansea College of Advanced Technology (HND Business Studies); University of Birmingham (LL.B); Bar Council (Barrister-at-Law) and later at Brunel University (MEd). JP 1991-Present.

Lectured in Law at Havering Technical College (1974-1983); Principal Lecturer and Deputy Head, Business Studies Department at Windsor and Maidenhead College (1983-1985); Head of Business and Academic Studies at the then Dunstable College. Bedfordshire County Councillor 1993-2009; Central Bedfordshire Councillor 2009-2019 (Chairman 2010-2012, Chairman Social Care, Health and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2015-2019); Dunstable Town Councillor 2009-Present (Mayor 2016-2017).

Senior Examiner Associated Examining Board 'O' Level Law for 9 years, Moderator, Business Education Council also for 9 years.

Have been or still am - Governor at Ardleigh Hill Lower School (now a Primary Academy); Governor at Northfields Upper School (now All Saints Academy); Trustee

at the Luton Law Centre; Director at South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride; Trustee Ashton Schools Foundation; Committee Member Dunstable International Twinning Association (DITA); President, Dunstable Musical Theatre Company; Committee Member, Friends of Priory House and Gardens.

THE MAYOR IN A PANDEMIC, LOCKED DOWN, ISOLATING SOCIETY

This is a new situation! The Town Council has had to cancel its events programme up to and including the Fireworks Display where otherwise crowds, people shoulder to shoulder, would have been attracted – against Government regulations. Other Councils have of course also had to cancel their events so no invitations received or to be sent for the time being.

Committee and other meetings are for the time being ‘virtual’ meetings using Teams or Zoom. The first Full Council meeting (being the Annual General Meeting) was held on Monday 18 May when the Mayor was nominated and elected. When we are released from lockdown and schools and shops, businesses and clubs and societies can send invitations, the Mayor will be able to resume his duties and support the local community by attending various events. The Town Council events programme can also then be reinstated.

In preparation for my role I drafted a piece for the next Talk of the Town - Dunstable Town’s news sheet; edited this for the Dunstable Gazette and then for the Town Council website.

Monday 18 May

- Zoom meeting with CBC Dunstable Councillor Portfolio Holders – discussions around parking, schools opening, tourism and other matters re the pandemic
- Photo taken to go with press release for Dunstable Gazette
- Virtual Council Meeting (Annual General Meeting) at which elected Town Mayor who is also Chairman of the Council.

Tuesday 19 May

- Responded to the Town Council’s Finance and Procurement Manager re various financial statements
- Request from the son of a former Councillor and Governor at the then Dunstable College for some words on the occasion of his parent’s 70th Wedding Anniversary
- Received and commented on a business up-date from the Manager of South Bedfordshire Dial-a-Ride.

Wednesday 20 May

- Approved the draft Annual Council Minutes from Monday 18th
- Drafted copy on election as Mayor for the Town Council’s Business Support Manager for the Council website

- Zoom meeting with fellow councillors and Member of Parliament
- Purchased local paper with headline on wrap around and front page – ‘New Mayor takes oath of office’ and article on page 7.
- Invitation to a Zoom meeting for a Bedford charity on which I am a Trustee
- Congratulations from the Chairman of DITA and others
- Feelers out to the President of Pride of Dunstable Business Club (the local networking group for local businesses) offering support.

Thursday 21 May

- Decided to start a diary! – rewind to Monday to start from day of election.

Friday 22 May

- Virtual meeting for a Bedford charity with which I am involved
- Many Facebook congratulatory comments – responded to all
- Received papers for the next Plans Sub-committee
- E-mail from the newly installed High Sheriff wanting to recognise those who have been going ‘above and beyond’ to help others, staff members, keyworkers, volunteers.
- Our Cemetery Manager has won a Community Award for everything she does at the cemetery and particularly what she has done over the past few weeks since the pandemic – sent my congratulations
- Sent words to be read out at the 70th Wedding Anniversary, above (Tuesday)

Saturday 23 May

- Additional Facebook comments received; responses made
- Received invitation to join a Pride of Dunstable Business Club meeting.

Bank holiday weekend

Monday 25 May

- Another day at home in the garden under the isolation regulations

Tuesday 26 May

- Notification of an informal Council meeting (June 15th) to bring all colleagues up to date and give further opportunity for councillors to ask Town Clerk/Chief Executive questions about the Town’s activities during lockdown

Wednesday 27 May

- Received notes from the last Pride of Dunstable meeting
- Chairs meeting being arranged (Chairs of the three main committees and Mayor as Chairman of the Council).

Thursday 28th May

- Received and commented on a report from the Manager at South Beds Dial-a-Ride on which I am a Director
- Purchased a few plants from a Dunstable outlet – social distancing in being

Friday 29th May

- Joined Pride of Dunstable Business Networking Group virtual meeting – gave brief account of Town Council's activities and made a proposal to highlight Town centre shops and businesses

Saturday 30th May

- Joined bi-weekly Zoom meeting with immediate colleague councillors. Discussions around the improvements to start soon in High Street South.
- Raised possible opportunity for cycle lanes along High Street South
- Note – mixed outdoor market on June 13th, Middle Row
- Your councillors remain available as always by phone or e-mail
- Ordered Sunday dinner from local restaurant and enjoyed on Sunday!