



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

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING & MAYOR MAKING
HELD AT 7.00 PM ON MONDAY, 15TH MAY 2023 AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY**

PRESENT:

The Mayor, Cllr R Morgan
Cllr D Warman
Cllr M Wade

Cllr C Phillips
Cllr R Denness
Cllr P Gardner

Cllr R Pitt
Cllr S Austen
Cllr R Moss-Eccardt

Invited guests and dignitaries were also present

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 2023/2024

Cllr Austen proposed Councillor Chris Phillips to the position of The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ely. She was honoured to propose that Cllr Chris Phillips be installed as The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ely. Chris had put Ely Cemetery on the map with his historical knowledge and tours. He is well respected by all that meet him. He is passionate about inclusivity, and she knows he will continue to build on this.

Cllr Denness said she was delighted to second Cllr Austen's nomination. She had first encountered Chris at the District and Parish count 4 years ago in Ross Peers Sports Centre in Soham. They had spent several hours together chatting and discovered their shared interest in history and politics. Although they come from different political tribes, they share the conviction that representatives from both their camps and others in the Chamber lead to better decisions. This is because they emanate from an amalgam of diverse groups. Indeed, Chris and herself had worked together as members of the Inclusivity Working Group. The Group's purpose is to promote inclusivity in the city for those who live, work and visit and to call out and condemn hate crime on the rare occasions it happens. Chris and herself have been trustees for Ely Trinity Dole together for 4 years. Here, she has seen the depth of his compassion. The charity will soon merge with the Needhams Foundation. A sad but pragmatic and sensible change. Typically, Chris's sense of history leads him to want to ensure Trinity Dole's existence is not lost on amalgamation.

Finally, whilst she had described a thoughtful and kind man, one should not make the mistake of believing Chris is in any way a soft touch. Over coffee, when she had complained about opponents' campaign strategies, Chris will remind me, 'but Rebecca, it's all politics!'. Chris is not to be underestimated!

There being no other nominations and by unanimous agreement, Cllr Phillips was duly elected as the Chairman and Mayor.

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

2. 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 Phillip's read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office. He then swore the Oath of Allegiance.

3. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Mr & Mrs Bradney, Mayor of Cambridge, Mayor of Sandy, Head of Highfields School, Mayor of Godmanchester, Mayor of Kings Lynn, Chairman of South Cambs District Council, A Pickersgill, M Whitticase, Chairman of East Cambs District Council, Reverend C Dixon, Mr & Mrs South, Mr P Green, Reverend J Reveley, Mr & Mrs Leach and J Blanchard.

4. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2022/2023

Cllr Morgan said he was sufficiently inshore not to describe the last 12 months as a roller coaster but in fact it had been the privilege of their lives, for Jane and himself to spend the past 12 months as the Mayor and Mayoress. He thanked the Clerk, who he congratulated upon her recent qualification with a Certificate in Local Council Administration, and the Deputy Clerk for her continued support to councillors; and Marianne for keeping the Mayor's Diary. He also thanked The Very Reverend Mark Bonney, Dean of Ely, for being his Chaplain, and for arranging his Civic Service in the Cathedral last month. He gave grateful thanks, as always, to the many wonderful volunteers who do so much for the city. They are often unheard and unseen, but their contribution is valued.

He wanted to talk about a moment when a very special lady, who had been selfless not just for him but for Ely and Cambridgeshire. She is a strong, courageous, compassionate woman; and wherever she has gone, whether with young or old, whether comforting the grieving or supporting the youngsters, she made us proud. He had been proud of her for a long time, - she was his First Lady long before the Mayoralty - but never more so than in these last 12 months. As she had been welcomed to a public life, she never dreamed of having, people warm his heart as well as hers, and he was deeply grateful to her for what she had done.

Four years ago, the council had 6 new councillors: he thought that Cllr Rebecca Denness and himself were the only survivors from that year! During the past 12 months the council had welcomed Cllrs Peter Harris, Rob Pitt, Mary Wade and Daniel Edge – he was pleased that at least two of them had remained because we also bid farewell to Cllrs Alison & Christine Whelan, Sarah Bellow, Virginie Ganivet, Peter Harris, Daniel Edge, and two former Mayors Cllrs Elisabeth Every and Ian Lindsay. All these remarkable former councillors have helped to shape the council's voice, collectively, and practically, for many years – and we are most grateful.

At the recent spectacular Eel Day someone asked him how many events he had attended. He had reckoned it up and had attended in excess of 100 invitations and events – not forgetting a 100% attendance record in the council chamber! He had enjoyed every minute of it!

Like 2019 this year is a watershed year when we look back as well as forward to a new quadrennial. The council had installed traffic calming measures on Cambridge Road, Cam Drive, Lynn Road, Putney Hill Road, and Main Road, Prickwillow; dealt with the complaints about 'hooting' trains in Prickwillow and Queen Adelaide; and had kept the level crossings open in Queen Adelaide.

.....
THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

4. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2022/2023 continued

The council had been active in making sure there is a decent infrastructure for the new developments north of Cam Drive – to include: a new Co-Op store, a community centre, a café/bar, allotments, and a cricket pitch.

Here in The Maltings, it had been active in refurbishing! As promised, there is now new retractable tiered seating, a new glass washer, and new air filtration system fan and filters.

Sessions House continues to be used regularly throughout the week and it now earns income through rent.

The new exhibits at Oliver Cromwell House and Ely Museum continue to attract visitors from far and wide bringing in much needed income for our shops. Babylon Gallery continues to display wonderful art exhibitions and the cinema here continues to show major films.

The council continues to update and replace children's play equipment at St John's Playground, Paradise Centre, and Cherry Hill Park. Many new trees have been planted in the cemetery and also planted a Sensory Garden.

As Mayor he had been delighted to meet so many of people during the year: together they had rejoiced at HM The Queen's Platinum Jubilee – the street parties on Stour Green and in Prickwillow are particularly memorable – and had mourned her death. He had been gladdened to hear the proclamation of the new King and had hoped to have celebrated his coronation with the lighting of the city beacon but as you know it rained and it rained, and it rained!

These last few weekends they had much fun with residents of Prickwillow celebrating the King's Coronation at the Tree Canopy on Main Street, and meeting so many new and old friends on Damson Avenue; spending time with the Ribe Association and the London Welsh Male Voice Choir and Waterbeach Brass. These and so many other memories Jane and himself will always treasure as golden days, or as Tennyson wrote: "I am a part of all that I have met."

On behalf of parishioners, he had laid wreaths at the city war memorial on the 40th anniversary of those who fell during the Falklands War; at St Etheldreda's Chapel in the cathedral for those lost in the Far East from the Cambridgeshire Regiment; and at the city war memorial on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

The city had welcomed Ukrainian Refugees to Ely not just in our homes, but in our hearts also. We continue to hope and pray for better news in their homeland and that one day, God Willing, they may return to a peaceful and settled homelife.

In the course of the year the Jane and he had met The Princess Royal in the cathedral; the Duke of Edinburgh at Harry Specters Chocolate Factory at St Thomas Place; and the King & Queen at Buckingham Palace - a hat trick!

But time, like that mighty river out there keeps rolling along. Now shortly he would have to leave the stage for his successor, but before he did he wanted to present cheques to his two chosen charities. He was very grateful to KD Productions who had provided him with a very handsome amount from their pantomime Cinderella.

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

4. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2022/2023 continued

Magpas Air Ambulance is an emergency medical charity that provides pre-hospital emergency care, in the air or on land, including treatments normally only available in hospitals. The charity operates 24/7 from its base at RAF Wyton and is activated to seriously ill or injured patients in Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and the East of England – caring for a population of over 10 million. We often see the helicopter over our heads here. Jane and himself had been impressed by how many local Mayors and district council chairmen that they had met had taken up this worthy cause as their charity for their term of office. The chairman of South Holland District Council raised an amazing £10,000! We are not as wealthy as Lincolnshire Farmers, but he wanted to present them with a cheque which he hoped would help towards the vital work they do. Emma Sanders collected this on behalf of the charity.

Mind is a mental health charity in England and Wales. Founded in 1946 as the National Association for Mental Health (NAMH), it celebrated its 70th anniversary in 2016. Mind offers information and advice to people with mental health problems and lobbies government and local authorities on their behalf. It also works to raise public awareness and understanding of issues relating to mental health. Mind has celebrated World Mental Health Day annually since it was first observed in 1992. This occurs on the 10 October.

He wanted to do this in memory of two young women who, 20 years' apart, found life increasingly difficult. They both came from stable backgrounds, one a recently qualified lawyer, the other a schoolteacher. Tragically they lost the will to live because neither of them had the strength to ask for help. He hoped the cheque would help them in their work to raise public awareness and understanding of issues relating to mental health. Gary Sutcliffe collected this on behalf of the charity.

Finally, he said he had an envelope which he needed to look at. Was it from the Lord Great Chamberlain? No, that was last week! It must be from the Clerk. No, HM Revenue & Customs: Details of Employee Leaving Work P45 – time's up!

5. Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor

Cllr Wade said it was an honour and a pleasure to give the vote of thanks for Cllr Morgan who has served the City of Ely diligently for the past year. As a relatively new councillor she also personally thanked Cllr Morgan for how welcoming he had been to her on the council and how generous he had been with his time in explaining how things worked. She had observed this generosity with his time and welcoming attitude at the events she had the pleasure to attend where he had been present in his capacity as Mayor and she believed he had been an excellent ambassador for the City.

He approached the role with energy and enthusiasm and successfully raised money for his chosen charities of MAGPAS and MIND who have benefitted from his hard work. He was ably supported by his wife, Jane, who she also thanked for her work representing Ely over this period.

She was delighted that Cllr Morgan has remained on the council, wished him the best for the year ahead and sincerely thanked him for being the Mayor for the last year.

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

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

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

The newly elected Mayor said it was a great pleasure to welcome everyone here this evening – some, he knew, had travelled long distances to join this ceremony of Mayor Making. He thanked them all for coming. A year ago his colleagues on the Council had asked him to serve as Deputy Mayor and earlier this year did him the great honour of inviting him to become Mayor. He thanked them for putting their faith in him. He will do his best to be a hardworking and diligent holder of the office. He was delighted that working alongside him would be the Mayoress, Mary Rone. She is well known in Ely for her community and church-based work and kindness and generosity are words which are repeated often when people are speaking of her. They had worked well together over the past twelve months and are both determined to make a success of this coming year and also to enjoy themselves!

He thanked those who had put this evening together – the staff here at the Maltings and our Council officers have worked hard to make sure that everything is in good order. One of the pluses of being Mayor will be the chance to work more closely with our formidable staff team. They never blow their own trumpets so perhaps I can be allowed to say that as a City we are fortunate to have them and highly value their work.

He was pleased that the Cadets were here this evening and thanked them for their splendid guard of honour. He hoped to see more of them through this coming year but this evening he had to just say to them that as a City we are enormously proud of you – of who you are and how you conduct yourselves in our community. He also thanked Jane Morgan, the retiring Mayoress, who had been such a splendid co-worker with the Mayor.

He also added his thanks to Richard Morgan, the retiring Mayor. He shall try to emulate his hard work and diligence, but he did say at once that he shall never be able to match his sartorial elegance which has already become the stuff of legend!

He said that of tonight he had acquired the title of 'Right Worshipful'. He used to be a 'Very Reverend'. He said he would leave it to those present to decide whether he had gone 'up a ladder or down a snake'!

When people speak about Ely it is very often in the context of history – and history is certainly something we have in abundance. Ours is an old town – right now we are celebrating the 1,350th anniversary of St Etheldreda's founding of the religious house which grew into one of England's most important monastic establishments.... its buildings still dominate our skyline. Then we have Hereward the Wake who resisted the Norman invasion of England and whose story is not told often enough. William Wolsey and Robert Pygot burned at the stake on Palace Green during the Reformation and whose pitiful commemorative plaque surely needs rescuing and re-siting. Oliver Cromwell - hero or villain in British history – most people have a view – his former house is in the centre of the city – it is run by the City Council and well worth a visit if you have not seen inside it. He understood it was haunted. He had done his duty and warned them... you just don't know who you might bump in to! He said that one day he was walking past OCH and an American lady approached him and enquired if Cromwell had really lived there. He told her that he had – for getting on for ten years. “Well,” she said, “I ain't goin' in – he killed the King!”. He had always felt a strong affection for the Stuart cause

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

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

and so she and I had the grandest of conversations. In the end we decided that yes, we might forgive but no, we would not forget. But hero or villain, good man or bad, Cromwell is a key figure in local and national history and we in Ely are right to tell his story. Anna Bennett and her team who run the events at the house have done a wonderful job. 'The house' as it is known is on the map and visited by thousands... check out the gift shop for some early Christmas shopping.

Of course, he would really have liked to spend the whole evening talking history, a sort of pale imitation of the late, great local historian Mike Rouse, but he had to move on to speak about the present and even try to glimpse the future in terms of the year ahead. But before he did he suggested if they would like to know more of our history, they should visit the Museum. Again it is very much part of the City Council's responsibility and for a small museum it is full of interest and excitingly bang up to date after its recent refurbishment.

Now what of today? Over the past twelve months, deputising for the Mayor and Mayoress, Mary and himself had caught a glimpse of the richness of community life that exists in Ely. They went to Thinking Day with the Guides, Brownies and Rainbows and thought with them about the environment. They visited the Rich Tea Club which offers, quote, “fun, faith and friendship for adults with learning disabilities plus any carers and friends” and his rendering of 'We're all going on a summer holiday' was well received, if he said so himself. They had been to EARTH which provides gardening experience and recreational activities, again for adults with learning disabilities. They spent a happy morning with a group that cares for carers and proved ourselves to be really quite good at indoor curling. He had given talks at the Monday Club and the Tuesday Club. He was still waiting for Wednesday, Thursday and Friday! They had been invited to be guests at a truly enjoyable summer pantomime in the Dean's garden and to a fine concert by the Ely Sinfonia. They joined a big gathering of Muslim friends and shared an Iftar meal with them during Ramadan. They had presented certificates at the library's summer reading challenge, applauded and congratulated a group of Year 8s and 9s who completed an arduous course with the local Fire Service, and been proud to be part of Ely Pride helping to run the Council's Information Table on its Inclusivity policy.

What was he trying to say? He thought it was this. Of course, Ely isn't perfect despite some people being of the opinion that its name is a shortened version of Elysium – a place of ideal happiness - but he thought we could all agree that a strong sense of community exists amongst us. We are becoming, despite setbacks along the way, a town that is open, welcoming, diverse, inclusive, creative. That is a direction the City Council applauds, that is the course we have set over these past years and which he will continue to chart with the help of his colleagues and with your support.

Do you read the Ely Magazine? 10,000 copies delivered door to door. What always strikes him is that there are pages and pages of information about local groups – arts and crafts, campaign groups, drama and theatre, dance, education, volunteering, fundraising, health, history, hobby and interest groups, language and literature, music, nature and the outdoors, religious organisations, social groups, sport and exercise, support and care groups, youth organisations. It all adds up to our city being a vibrant, can-do community, a good place to live – somewhere with a past, yes, but somewhere with an exciting present and an undoubtedly positive future. Of course he was not so naïve as to disregard that other side of life that exists everywhere in our country – food banks, anti-social behaviour, cost of living crisis and so on and so forth and at parish council level we have few resources to help solve these national problems – a little help here, a word there – but we can advocate on behalf of our citizens (our parishioners), we can listen to those who need a listening ear and we can bend the ears of

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

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

those whose power and influence is greater than ours. It's a big responsibility – but we should embrace it gladly.

So, what could they expect from him and the Council in the coming weeks and months. First, he promised that we will get up to our proper numbers just as soon as we can. He was very disappointed that the number of candidates coming forward did not match the number of vacancies. But, as they say, 'we are where we are' – and isn't that an irritating expression! - and now a process of co-option will begin and six new councillors will be in place in literally a week or so's time. Second, we will continue to do well what we do, do well – tourism, events, care of our recreation areas, care of the cemetery, helping local groups with small grants, Christmas lights and so on. Third, we will do all that we can on issues of climate and environment and fourth we will reaffirm our commitment to Inclusivity, Diversity and Equality and continue our outreach to a wide range of community groups operating in and around the city.

Could we do better in some areas? Of course we could and he hoped we shall see, for example, councillors working harder to establish new ways of communicating with our electorate. He hoped, too, that we can explore ways of bringing the Sessions House into community use. He knew that the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Rob Pitt, was keen to get on with this and having his experience and energy brought to bear on these areas of the Council's life can only be to the good.

Mary and he had discussed where their focus is to be. Mayors and Mayoresses come and go; their term of office is only twelve months save in exceptional circumstances. So they will focus on community and on words like, support, affirm, celebrate, thank, congratulate, and asked for people to add to the list for them! They are looking forward to invitations to different groups and organisations and were excited about some of the things happening in the city in the months to come – Ben's Yard, for example, but also all the traditional feasts and festivals and this year's celebrations surrounding our Patron Saint. One more thing, in 1974 Ely was granted city status by Royal Charter. He hoped we were going to celebrate and he knew he could call on their help when the council is thinking about just what they want to do.

Recently he had discovered how convenient it is to go into Cambridge by bus from Market Street – faster than doing Park and Ride and a chance to go upstairs on a double decker! He told them this because when you sit upstairs a familiar journey – the A10 – takes on a new perspective. From upstairs you can see over hedges and walls, catch sight of houses you would never have been able to see before, admire gardens, see fields of crops, church spires in the distance. It is great and so why do they not do that, metaphorically, colleagues, for this coming twelve months they shall travel a familiar road but just maybe, they can see things with fresh eyes, catch sight of new possibilities, new ways of doing things and engage more with the landscape. They will try to avoid potholes.

He said he had gone on for far too long, but asked people to stay and have a glass of something with him. He thanked everyone for coming this evening and thanked them for the support they always gave.

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023

7. Election of the Vice Chairman who shall become the Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely for the ensuing year 2023/2024

Cllr Mary Wade proposed Cllr Rob Pitt, for the Vice Chairman of the Council. She said she had great pleasure in nominating Cllr Pitt to this role. She felt that they shared the same conviction of what should be done by the council. She said that Cllr Pitt had the knack of getting people to do things, which was a large part of why she was now on the council.

Cllr Richard Morgan said he was happy to second his nomination. He had been invited to the St Johns Ambulance sensory garden by Cllr Pitt. They had a lovely time and felt they were doing wonderful things there.

There being no other nominations and by unanimous agreement, Cllr Pitt was duly elected as the Vice-Chairman and Deputy Mayor.

He was invested with the Chain of Office.

He read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

Cllr Pitt thanked everyone for coming and thanked the air cadets for their effort and energy. He thought the diversity of the guests present demonstrated what a wonderful network there was in the city that cares very deeply about Ely and its surrounds. From this he felt that under the leadership of Cllr Phillips much would be achieved, working together. He had asked an old friend from the Army about what to say about a man of such protein rich intellect, worldly wisdom, deep human empathy, fundamental positivity, community spirit and unbreakable humour. After his disbelief that he had been speaking about a politician, he had suggested that he sounded 'simply too good to be true and thought he was probably plotting something'. To that end, he had settled on 'Chris Phillips is a thoroughly decent human being, someone he was proud to consider a friend and a councillor made in the best British political traditions of empathy, unselfishness, care and ideas. His sole hope was that he could stop him before it was too late.' He concluded by saying it was his honour to serve both Cllr Phillips and his fellow councillors and more broadly the community as represented tonight, and he thanked all for the opportunity to be heard.

8. Committees and representatives to other organisations

Appointments as detailed separately, were proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Pitt and were unanimously approved.

9. Authorisation of Signatories

Signatories as detailed below, were proposed by Cllr Phillips and seconded by Cllr Pitt and were unanimously approved.

Barclays Bank account – any two of the Mayor, Cllr Morgan and Cllr Pitt.

Cambridge Building Society accounts – any two of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Cllr Morgan and Cllr Denness.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm.

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THE MAYOR
22ND MAY 2023