



**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, 13TH MAY 2024 AT THE MALTINGS, SHIP LANE, ELY**

PRESENT:

The Mayor, Cllr C Phillips
Cllr M Banyard
Cllr M Wade
Cllr R Trent

Cllr R Denness
Cllr Ní Dhónaill
Cllr L Fox

Cllr R Morgan
Cllr K Holtzmann
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 2024/2025

Cllr Banyard proposed Councillor Chris Phillips to continue in the position of The Right Worshipful the Mayor of the City of Ely. He said that Cllr Phillips had led the Council in a distinguished year as Mayor, very ably supported by his Mayoress, Mrs Mary Rone. Cllr Phillips had been seen in so many places in Ely and the wider local area, representing the Council and the whole city. His meticulous, detailed and careful approach and preparation at events, had shown a very apt contribution and encouragement to many groups of all ages in our midst. He is very highly respected for his diligent leadership, inclusivity of every group and individual in our city and in our villages. It was a considerable honour both to propose Cllr Phillips and to know him as a colleague and friend.

Cllr Ní Dhónaill said she was delighted to second Cllr Banyard's nomination.

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

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 Cllr S Austen, Cllr D Warman, Cllr R Ward, the High Sheriff, Mr B Ashton, Mayor of March Town Council, Mr P Green, Mayor of Cambridge, Ms A Heffernan, Ms M Whitticase, Mayor of King's Lynn, Mr & Mrs Overall, Ms D Clark, Mayor of Ramsey, Inspector S

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Birch, Bishop Dagmar, Mayor of Godmanchester, Mr & Mrs Waine, Mayor of Peterborough, Mayor of Wisbech and Cllr M Goldsack.

4. Out Going Mayor's Report for 2023/2024

The newly elected Mayor welcomed everyone to the Mayor Making ceremony. He said as this year, there is not the usual 'changing of the guard' the focus is a more muted and that's right and proper but equally appropriate is this opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and perhaps just to catch a glimpse of the twelve months that lie ahead.

A year ago he had become Mayor and Chairman of the Council and in the normal course of events he would now be wrapping up what had been an exciting and rewarding time in office and so he did not think it was at all inappropriate to say some 'thank you's'. First, he thanked, the Clerks. It had been a treat to work with them and to have had their unstinting support. They are enormously knowledgeable and thoroughly professional and have guided and encouraged him at every turn of the way. He could not think of a group of colleagues he would rather work with. He said a special word of thanks to Marianne Pickering who had kept the Mayor's engagement diary and had ensured that he had always been in the right place, on the right day at the correct time .. no mean feat!

He also thanked his fellow councillors. When he stood here last year following the local elections we were only nine in number – there were no fewer than six vacancies - and it seemed like a bit of crisis. Long-serving councillors had retired and replacements were thin on the ground. Today, we are fifteen. There had been hiccups along the way but co-options and by-elections had brought together an interesting and talented team and the Council now is younger than it had been for many a long year and positively overflowing with new ideas and energy. This evening he wanted to say a special word of welcome to the two winners in the very recent by-elections in West Ward – Cllr Will Novick and Cllr Christine Whelan. They are both welcome additions to the Council and he knows that they have the interests of the community at heart. It will be good to be able to work with them. The fifteen of them, it would be true to say, all share – with variations on the theme, of course – a progressive vision for the City combined with an understanding of and respect for its history.

He also said a word about one former colleague and one current member of the Council. This time last year Rob Pitt was elected as Deputy Mayor but part way through his term of office stepped down because of increased work responsibilities and the need for him to balance work and family life. These things happen but he wanted to place on record the Council's appreciation of his contribution to the life of the City and the enthusiasm and zeal he brought to his role. In his place the Council appointed Cllr Rebecca Denness. He had first met Rebecca in 2019 at the Ross Peers Sports Centre in Soham. He wanted to be able to tell everyone that they had been involved in some energetic game of squash perhaps but alas, no. They were there for the counting of votes in Ely West. He had arrived there first and had seen which way the wind was blowing and had made some encouraging remark. Cllr Denness moved over to speak to her party's agent and he heard her say 'That chap over there says I'm in' ! He was glad he was not wrong because they have been good colleagues and firm friends since that day and it had been a real pleasure to work together with Rebecca as Mayor and Deputy Mayor over these past months. Of course, had all things been equal, she would have been taking over as Mayor this evening but events have conspired and she is fulfilling a long-held ambition to stand, as we say in this country, for Parliament. Who knows what will happen in West Suffolk later this year when voters go to the polls but should she be successful, she has promised not to forget her old friends and he had already had plans for getting up a coach party and having tea on the Terrace of the House of Commons .. names to me at the end of this meeting, please! Seriously, though, had the chance for a seat in Parliament not come along Cllr Denness would have brought to the role of Mayor a quiet

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4. Out Going Mayor’s Report for 2023/2024 continued

passion for and commitment to fairness and a desire for change and progress. But she is not leaving the Council and so these qualities will not be lost to us!

Lastly he thanked Mary Rone, the Mayoress. She possesses all the skills required to make an enormous success of the role – a kind and generous spirit, an interest in people – who they are and what they do - and working with her over the past two years he said they had become, if he said so himself, a formidable team. He was pleased to say that she had agreed to serve with him again and he was glad and grateful that she had. After twelve months in office they just about know what they are doing and they are determined to give a second year their best shot.

Over the past year they had attended a good hundred events. They had supported colleagues holding office in nearby towns as part of the aptly named 'chain gang', had been ambassadors for the City at several events at the USAF bases, had performed civic duties on occasions such as Remembrance Sunday. They had also listened to a lot of good music – including the wonderful Ely Folk Festival – and taken part in major community events like Eel Day, Aquafest and Ely Pride. In fact 'community' had very much been their watchword. What a privilege it had been to present the Cadets, Army and Air Force, with the Freedom of the City or to preach at this year's Civic Service in the Cathedral. What a privilege, too, to have been able to visit so many community groups where volunteers give of their time and talents to serve and to succour and to make our community stronger, more welcoming, a better place to be. Something which had occurred time and time again throughout the year – and past Mayors he was sure, would affirm this – that when they had visited groups and events – Foodbank, for example, the Cadets, the Rich Tea Club, clubs for the elderly and so on, over and again they had taken far more away from the visit than ever they took there. That speaks volumes for the work that is going on in Ely and for the kind of community we are. He was very pleased to be able to tell the meeting that the Mayor's Charity had raised this year well over £4,000, with that money going toward the work of NSPCC. There is a strong local group – and it works very hard for NSPCC - and it had been another good experience to be able to work alongside them.

And the coming year? He must, of course, thank his colleagues for giving him the opportunity to serve as Mayor for a second year. He will do everything he can to do the best job that he can. He was very pleased that Cllr Michael Banyard is to serve as Deputy Mayor. Mike and he have a friendship that goes back more than thirty years – and never a cross word – and so he really looked forward to working closely with him over these next months.

One thing that he wanted to mention at the end of the old year/start of the new is that he thought it was time to retire the chain and the robe currently in use by the Mayor. The chain, which is now fifty years old, is increasingly fragile with several links barely holding together and one or two repaired over the course of the past year with discreet safety pins. The robe is patched, stained, plucked and in one or two places in holes. He had thought this for some time and had been reluctant to risk either on public occasions and now colleagues and members of the public who were at the Civic Service had voiced the same opinion. It will be easy to find a civic robe which will actually add to the dignity of the office and even a new chain will not be impossible to source. The old chain, he suggested, would be best mounted and put on public display. He agreed to keep everyone informed but better he thought to quote Gilbert and Sullivan, that the Mayor of Ely should look to be more like the 'very model of a modern Major General' - rather than like Nanki-Poo, the wandering minstrel in the Mikado, 'a thing of shreds and tatters'.

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4. Out Going Mayor’s Report for 2023/2024 continued

In the meantime, he hoped that the emphasis of the coming year would again be on community – reinforcing links made over these past months, finding new opportunities for involvement, exploring new initiatives, upholding, affirming, encouraging, congratulating but also listening and learning from those who know more and whose experience so enriches our civic life.

He was proud of what had been achieved over the year – the Council's unfaltering commitment to equality, diversity, inclusivity – the growing awareness of environmental issues and what we the Council can do about them – our determination to provide quality services and run a thoroughly professional Council. As a Council we are 50 years old – a Golden Jubilee – and we can look back on many achievements and look forward with growing confidence - that's the Plan!

To echo what he had said at the Civic Service a couple of weeks ago – I have finished, so I had better stop. He promised there would be no second speech – at least not from him and asked that everyone join him for a drink and something to eat before they left. He thanked everyone again for their attendance and support and hoped that everyone looked forward to a year of progress.

5. Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor

Cllr Denness, in Cllr Austen’s absence due to being unwell, said it was an honour and a pleasure to give the vote of thanks for Cllr Phillips who has served the City of Ely for the past year. She said he was kind but firm and had been an excellent Chair and Mayor. She also thanked him personally for the support he had given to her other the last year. She hoped he would have another successful year with Mary at his side.

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

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

Cllr Phillips did not make a separate statement of acceptance of office as he had included this in agenda item 4, as he was continuing in the role of Chairman and Mayor for a second year.

7. Election of the Vice Chairman who shall become the Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely for the ensuing year 2024/2025

Cllr Denness proposed Cllr Michael Banyard, for the Vice Chairman of the Council. She said she was delighted to propose Cllr Banyard and felt he would be an excellent support to Cllr Phillips in his role of Deputy Mayor.

Cllr Wade said it was her pleasure to second Cllr Michael Banyard for Deputy Mayor. She had known Cllr Banyard since he joined the council last year representing Cathedral Ward and had been impressed by his knowledge of Ely and his desire to ensure that the council hears from a range of residents. He comes with a wealth of experience of dealing with, and most importantly, listening to a range of people within the community over his career and he brings these strong communication skills to the council. We will certainly look forward to a year of great public speaking and a wealth of anecdotes from both our representatives.

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7. Election of the Vice Chairman who shall become the Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely for the ensuing year 2024/2025 continued

She wanted to express her thanks to Cllr Banyard for the time he is about to dedicate to the City of Ely in this role and she was really looking forward to working with both him and Cllr Phillips over the next year to represent the City and to engage effectively with residents.

There being no other nominations and by unanimous agreement, Cllr Banyard 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.

8. Committees and representatives to other organisations

Appointments as detailed separately, were proposed by Cllr Morgan and seconded by Cllr Denness and were unanimously approved.

9. Authorisation of Signatories

Signatories as detailed below, were proposed by Cllr Morgan and seconded by Cllr Denness and were unanimously approved.

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

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

The meeting closed at 7.30 pm.

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