

Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe
Mayor of Newbury
2019 – 2021



Official Record of Years in Office
19th May 2019 – 4th May 2021

Date of Mayor Making: 19th May 2019

Deputy Mayor:	Cllr Billy Drummond
Consort:	John Gardner
Chaplain:	Fr Bruce Barnes & Fr Peter Codd
Cadet:	Kieran Fell & Yuri O’Keeffe
Civic Manager:	Joyce Lewis & Elisa Adams

Civic Staff

Mayor’s Attendant – Ian Campbell

Town Crier – Brian Sylvester

Town Marshal – Barry Digby

Mace Bearer – Rod Thomason

Mace Bearer – Garry Poulson

Reserve Mace Bearer – Anthony Hewitt

Keeper of the Robes – Joyce Lewis

Mayor’s Chosen Charities

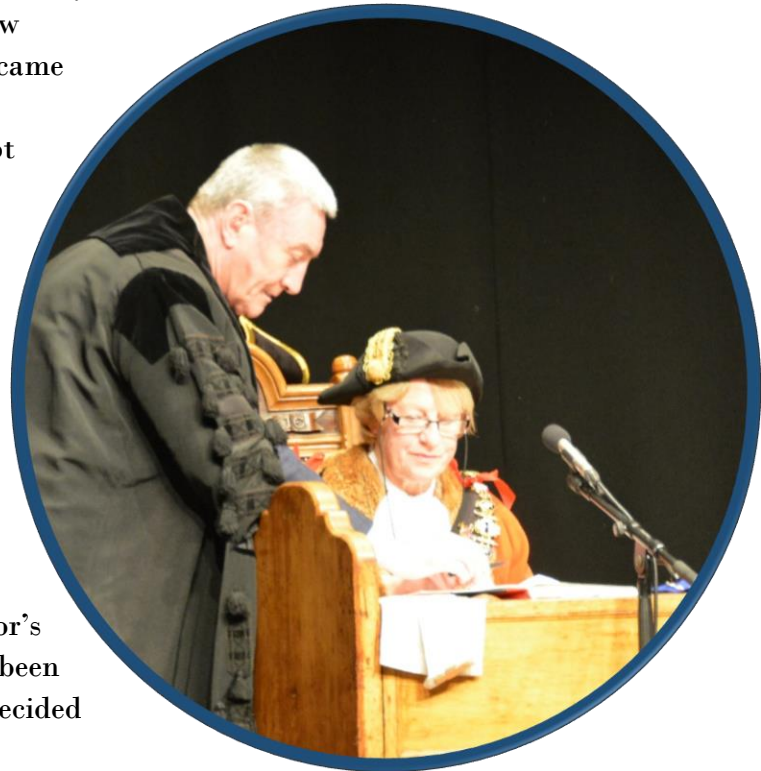
Time to Talk West Berkshire

Berkshire Women’s Aid

A Taste of the Civic Year 2019/20 & 2020/21

It has been an honour and privilege to serve Newbury as Mayor for the past 2 years. I thank all my fellow Councillors for giving me the opportunity. I became Mayor unexpectedly following local elections. I admit that at the time I felt a little regret at not having had a year as Deputy to prepare. Well, we never know what life has in store; I got two years!

The first year went according to plan up until January 2020 when we all became aware that something momentous was unfolding. A few other changes had unfolded. The long serving Civic Manager retired in early summer and a new officer was appointed who has done an amazing job in these unprecedented circumstances but has yet to experience a Mayor's full term of usual events. Fr Bruce Barnes had been appointed as my Chaplain however the bishop decided he would best serve the diocese if sent to Guernsey. I then appointed Fr Peter Codd a retired priest living in Newbury. The bishop struck again sending him to cover a parish in Southampton for a few months. By the time he returned we were well into lockdowns. I decided to continue without an active chaplain. Mr John Gardner supported me as my Consort during 2019 but we were unable to continue during 2020-21 given various restrictions.



My personal theme and charity for my term was young people. The Mayor's chosen charity being Time 2 Talk Youth Counselling Service. Despite Covid 19, Time 2 Talk has grown, developed, and successfully raised funds. They have a dedicated board of Trustees and amazing staff the majority being volunteers. Like many organisations they diversified to zoom and other mediums to deliver the service to clients. Services in secondary schools have been expanded, work in primary schools is in a pilot stage. Sadly, Covid has increased the need for the service and younger children are presenting. To address the needs online courses and webinars in coping were developed for parents and carers.



During my second year, I added Berkshire Women's Aid as an additional charity. Unfortunately, as with counselling we saw domestic abuse rise during Covid Lockdowns. Due to restrictions, it was difficult to raise awareness and raise funds for the charity.

There were many Civic and official events during term one, The Mayors drive and tea for our elderly citizens where I met Ruth Saunders aged 103. I again visited her on her 104th birthday accompanied by my nephew Yuri who played Happy Birthday on his violin in the pouring rain. Ruth went on to walk a marathon round her streets I had the privilege of accompanying her last week and again as she completed at the winner's enclosure Newbury Racecourse raising funds for Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Living near Northcroft I have always loved the Michaelmas Fair week and had the delight of ringing the ancient bell to open it in 2019. Also taking away a huge bear to raffle for the Mayors Benevolent Fund. Remembrance Service is always both a sad and uplifting occasion in our community. The slimmed down version in 2020 was even more poignant.

I had the honour of completing Newbury's twinning with Carcaixent in the presence of mayors from all our twin towns. It was a joyous weekend. I hosted a dinner for the mayors the evening before the official ceremony and The Newbury Twin Town Association hosted a dinner and party after the event. I wish the Association well now that we are no longer in the European Union and funding streams will change.

The St David's Day charity concert given by South Wales Male Voice Choir must be one of the memorable experiences. This was special and moving as they dedicated one piece to Tony Hiller, one of our council officers, who had died suddenly a week before the concert. They recognised the technical support he had given them which was a lovely gesture.



There were opportunities to attend functions that represented the monarch or state. The High Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant's garden parties were an opportunity to meet other Berkshire Mayors and various leaders. The Judicial Service at the Minister Church in Reading marking the start Of The Judicial Year. The Lord Lieutenants' Presentation to military cadets at Bradfield College in 2019 and from my sitting room on Zoom in 2021. The Sunset Ceremony at Dennison Barracks in the presence of the HRH Duchess of Wessex. Welcoming HRH Earl of Wessex when he came to visit our Town Chartered Market as lockdown eased. It was of course with sadness that I attended the Commemoration Service at St Nicholas on the death of HRH Philip Duke of Edinburgh.



I represented Newbury at remembrance services a RAF Welford USAF base. Laying wreaths on the town's behalf. And again, at the Unveiling and Dedication of the Memorials at Greenham in memory of US forces that gave their lives in WWII. A wreath was also laid at Royal British Legion in March to commemorate the Tigris loss.

There were visits to schools, Newbury College, charities, senior citizens residential homes, AGMs virtual and in person - far too numerous to mention. All left me with the knowledge that we have a committed, hardworking, and vibrant community. I danced with the Silver Surfacers at Argyles and judged the best dog at Gracewell. I ate a lot of delicious cakes at fund raising charity coffee mornings in The Town Hall.

I opened many shops and new businesses before and during Covid19. In year one there were many wonderful carol concerts and other performances which were sadly cancelled as time progressed. There were a few unique experiences, helping to drag the bedecked chariot for the Rathayatra festival from the Market Place to Victoria Park. Juicing buckets of apples on Apple Day, trying to plant bulbs in very hard ground, riding the Canal Trust advertising bike and cart at Blenheim to mention a few.



I was honoured to be invited by Lord St John of Bletso to attend a reception at the House of Lords where he was hosting the evening to raise funds for Berkshire Youth's refurbishment of Waterside.. A representative group visited Christ's Hospital School in Horsham to re-establish the local link with the West's Gifts funding scheme, however, plans again were a victim of Covid in 2020. Long may this link continue.



I have sought to introduce community participation in designing the Mayor's Christmas Card. In 2019 a competition was launched at Newbury College and in 2020 we collaborated with the Newbury Weekly News running a competition for 3 different age groups. The winner in each group received a prize. The winning design was printed as the official 2020 Christmas Card. I hope following mayors will continue this tradition to involve the local community.

From December 2020, with the assistance of the Civic Manager, I began to master making video appearances and messages. Among them were linking the BID Shop Local film, the Mayors Christmas Message, Louise Purton Christmas Toy Appeal, Virtual Christmas Light Switch On, Happy 80th

anniversary Berkshire Youth, and our Town Civic Awards. For the last event, all presenters appeared on short films around the town. The needs throughout the pandemic led the council to create a special award for the Civic Awards to find those who had made outstanding contributions. A competition was run to create a pin badge for our local Community Champions. These were presented to several individuals in all the Civic Awards categories.

I spent much time as we went in and out of lockdowns visiting our retail, restaurants and entertainers offering moral support, thanking them for their efforts and letting them know we were all behind them.

The events that make the Mayor's term are visiting all our wonderful charities; Rotary, Lions, societies supporting specific health conditions, voluntary groups meeting the needs of homeless, our schools, sports and art clubs and societies. The work and commitment of these groups is not measurable.

I could write many pages on the experiences the above is only a glimpse. Thank you to everyone for allowing me the amazing experience. I wish my successor Cllr. William Drummond a great year as Newbury's First Citizen. He has had to wait too long - he will be a hardworking, fun-loving Mayor.



Newbury Town Council recorded its Thanks to
Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe
on behalf of the people of Newbury in recognition of her
2 Years in Office at Town Mayor
19th May 2019 to 4th May 2021

Present when the Seal of
Newbury Town Council
was affixed

Leader of the Council: Martin Colston

CEO of Newbury Town Council: Hugh Peacocke
Dated 27th June 2021

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

10th June 2019

I would like to thank all those who attended Mayor Making friends, relatives of us all, fellow councillors and the Civic team. You all contributed to it being a memorable day. A special thank you to the Civic Manager and CEO for their organisation given that it was a new administration and there was not a mayor elect. I have been struck by the number of people who have commented on the Civic Ceremony. The people of Newbury clearly value the tradition and were proud to be part of it.

I have attended the following events: -

1. Catenian Annual Fund-Raising Dinner Newbury College.
2. Newbury Spring Festival Closing Concert, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.
3. Roc 10K Race
4. Iftar celebration at Newbury Mosque.
5. Charity Coffee Morning – Berkshire Grandparents Support Group

The Deputy Mayor attended the official opening of The Regus Site in Newbury.

Since taking on the role I have become very aware of the importance local charities, business, schools and other organisations attach to the mayor attending their events. I will just highlight a few points from the engagements. We had a delicious meal at Newbury College prepared and served by students all of whom are hoping to find work in the area. The restaurant is open on Wednesday and Friday lunch times and Thursday evening. I whole heartedly recommend it.

The Spring Festival was wonderful and a delight to see many of our councillors in the choir.

The Roc 10K involves hundreds of people from all age groups from under 5 to plus. Thanks to Newbury Athletics Club and Roc Technology. Lovely to see all the tots running and the determination of teenagers.

I have been attending Iftar celebrations for many years I know the mosque were very happy to have so many councillors attending this year. We were given an informative talk, supper and little gifts.

The coffee morning was of course the first I attended as Mayor. I must say this one had the most scrumptious cakes. Please do drop in for coffee/tea and cake whenever one is on and encourage friends and family. All these events are raising funds for our local charities.

I will be arranging 2 or 3 coffee mornings look out for dates and get out your cake recipes. There will be other funding raising events any suggestions welcome. Keep in mind Mayors Drive on July 3rd. drivers needed.

Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

21st October 2019

Fellow councillors my first report to Full Council was short. The role has gathered momentum apace since then. The Deputy Mayor Cllr Billy Drummond and I have been quite busy. I would like to thank Cllr Drummond who is always ready to step in when events clash or I am away, he is a great support. I believe it has also been useful for some of you to accompany me when my consort is not available. I hope you have found it useful and interesting. It is a practice I will continue as it gives more members an insight into the role. I have attended a range of events and meetings totalling 72 in number. Cllr Drummond has attended 19. We seek to meet as many requests as possible. I will highlight a few in rough categories.

AGMs and Charity Coffee Mornings

Visiting these events reinforces for me the huge number of organisations there are in Newbury and the wonderful work they do. All are providing important services. From Lions to Grandparents support, from Loose Ends AGM to City Arts reception and exhibition.

Military Commemoration

Given that we have been commemorating the 70th anniversary of WWII there have been several memorial events. Air Force Welford unveiling of the memorial at Welford camp and the Unveiling and Dedication of the Memorials in memory of the US Air Force at Greenham Common, in memory of those from the base who lost their lives in service. These were moving occasions and serve as reminder to us all of what our countries went through together. I attended 211 Squadron Air Cadets Inspection and Presentation Ceremony. The Lord Lieutenant presented awards and I presented the NTC cadet cup to the cadet, who due to their achievement and service had been chosen to be the Mayors Cadet for the year. Kieran Fell was the winner. Cllr Andy Moore also attended this event in his role as WBC Liaison Cllr. Cllr Colston accompanied me to a Sunset Ceremony at Hermitage base.

Sheriff and Lord Lieutenant

The Lord Lieutenants and the High Sherriff's at Home were among the grander occasions affording an opportunity to meet and network with other Mayors and heads of various organisations. These occasions are the opportunity for the Lord Lieutenant and High Sherriff to invite those in public service to their homes to say 'thank you' to all in Civic service representing their communities.

Church Services

In the company of Cllrs Drummond and Moore, I attended the licencing of the new vicar of St Johns. One of those times when someone approaches you on arrival saying, 'Will you do the second welcome speech to the new vicar, you don't have to say a lot'; I was

thankful that I know my area and had done a quick background check prior to event. The Sheriff's Judicial Services at The Minster in Reading was a colourful event. All West Berkshire Mayors and Council Chairs gathered at Reading Civic Centre. We then processed to the Minister. There we met the High Sheriff, Judges and Magistrates. The music and singing were truly uplifting. The choir from Down House amazing. I opened the Rathayatra Festival in high winds, leading the cart and deities' statues around the town a colourful but tense event given the inclement weather.

Business

Several local shops, restaurant and businesses have been asking for the Mayor's presence. The 10th anniversary of International Taste Solutions was a day of contrasts. Introduction at Racecourse, double decker ride to and from factory visit, afternoon presentation at racecourse and evening auction and dinner. I did not attend the whole day. This company supports several local and national charities each year.

Senior Citizens

The deputy Mayor and I have attended several Care Homes to a range of events, they are always great fun. When visiting individuals for their 100th Birthdays I have concluded if you make it past 80 you are on a roll. The 100-year olds are always 'really with it'. The Mayor's Drive was of course the highlight, even if rather hot in full regalia. Many thanks to all of you who drove guests. We have now launched the parcel fund - look out for fundraising coffee morning.

Schools and College

We have attended debating competitions, art exhibitions, food tasting, sports events including Bisham Abbey Sports Centre for the Berkshire School Games. The achievements and standards in our places of education are to be commended.

Twin Towns

Many of you were present at the Official Ceremony sealing the Twinning with Carcaixent. It was a weekend of debates, dinners, and even Brexit. Cllr Norman accompanied me to the dinner and disco. Cllr Norman is a mean dancer, perhaps I should show the video!

We of course also had a special Council Meeting to say goodbye and thank you to our former Civic Manager, Joyce Lewis. A happy event tinged with sadness.

I am pleased that we now have a full team; Elisa Adams Civic Manager, Kieran Fell Mayors Cadet, and Fr Peter Codd, Chaplin.

Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

3rd February 2020

The most important event in this period was Remembrance Sunday. It is always a poignant event attended by many hundreds of our community. Thank you all for representing our town. On the 11th November I travelled to USAF Welford to take part in their ceremony and lay a wreath on behalf of Newbury.

This report covers the very busy Christmas season. There were many enjoyable carol concerts, various charities tea and lunch parties with accompanying entertainments. From tea at church halls to the grand gallery at Englefield House. Everyone was great fun with its unique client group. I started the charity Santa Fun Run and packed parcels for the over 80s at Sainsbury, collected food donations at Tesco for their parcel distribution. We hosted a reception at the Town Hall following the Christmas Light Switch on. This was a successful event and I hope it will be repeated. I asked Newbury College students to design the Mayors Christmas Card. The Deputy Leader and Civic Manager joined me to select the winning design. I hope you all valued receiving your card. Christmas Day itself commenced with a visit to our community hospital. I did a very good double act with Mike Cole Mayor of Thatcham. We visited all patients with Santa following on distributing gifts. I then went to St Georges to spend some time at the community day of entertainment and lunch for those that would otherwise be home alone. This event has been running for many years and is another example of the great community spirit of Newbury.

There have been several visits to schools, looking at exhibitions, presenting prizes and watching productions. I was particularly impressed with the launch of the Park House Computing Centre. They are working in partnership with business and providing training for our local primary schools.

You may recall that in my last reported I explained that my Chaplin had been redeployed to Alderney. I then appointed Fr Peter Codd to the position. However, the Bishop struck again Fr Codd has been asked to cover a Southampton Parish until March. I have decided to cope as best I can not try for number three.

The above are just a few of the events attended. Given the volume of requests the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Billy Drummond, was also kept very busy. My thanks to him.

Over time some of our council traditions have faded. The Civic Manager and I have set about researching and reviewing them.

The tradition of appointing a **Mayor's Cadet** was revived by the last Mayor and I have continued the tradition. Currently the cadet is provided by 211 Squadron Royal Airforce. The Mayor's Cup (property of the squadron) is presented at their Awards Ceremony to a cadet judged to have shown great commitment. The Lord Lieutenant presents the award with the Mayor presenting the cup and handing the Newbury Shield arm badge to the successful cadet. The Squadron support and assist at Mayor Making and Remembrance Sunday. All of this should continue. We are also considering the Mayor appointing a cadet from the other services. A paper will be presented to Civic Pride, Arts and Leisure in due course. Currently the council has no set policy.

I am delighted to report that the Civic Manager has re-established a link with **Christ's Hospital School and the Wests Gift**.

John and Frances West lived in the latter part of the 17th and early part of the 18th centuries. John West became a wealthy merchant in the City of London and lived in a house on the site that is now occupied by the Mansion House. John and Frances had no children of their own and the 'Standard Pedigree', maintained by Christ's Hospital, records the name of descendants of their relations. This charity established under the wills of the Wests', provides income for the benefit of children resident in the boroughs of Reading, Newbury and Twickenham, together with one girl from the City of London. The link to Newbury is that John married Frances Seakes from Reading, the granddaughter of the Mayor of Newbury, Gabriel Cox in 1627 and 1635.

I am working with the Civic Manager to arrange a small councillor's group visit to the school later this month. Following this visit, we are hopeful that future visits may be able to take place, giving future Mayors the opportunity to visit the school.

The aims are to meet the current West Scholars, invite them to the Annual Carol Service and see the work of the school. I would like the Council to promote these opportunities for Newbury students and following the visit to the School a proposal will be taken to the Civic Pride, Arts and Leisure Committee.

Councillor Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

15th May 2020

My final report as Mayor should have been delivered to Full Council in the Chamber on May 13th 2020. My term as Mayor ending on May 17th and Cllr. Drummond being invested as the Mayor for 2020-2021. The Coronavirus pandemic changed everything as it has changed our whole way of life. *Following the legal briefing and guidance from the National Association of Local Councils we will not be holding an Annual Meeting this year and I will remain Mayor until we next have an Annual Meeting, probably May 2021.*

Official engagements started to be cancelled from January 2020 as it became apparent that the virus was spreading out of China. All engagements ceased completely on 14th March 2020. It is unlikely that they will commence again for many months. We must of course wait until being advised it is again safe to do so. The sad decision to cancel the Mayor's Drive in early July has been taken. The situation will also result in less money being raised for the Mayor's Benevolent Fund and Mayor's Chosen Charities. Only eighteen engagements were carried out between 1st February and 14th March. Among them were the following:

Chairing the Twin Towns AGM. I have recently written to the mayors of all the towns we are twinned with, sending our thoughts and best wishes to them at this difficult time.

On the 17th I attended a wonderful concert in Reading given by the Berkshire Youth Symphony Orchestra. A group of truly accomplished musicians.

On the 24th a small group of councillors visited Christ Hospital School in Horsham. We wished to once again establish the town's historic link with them. It was an informative and useful event. We were really welcomed, and a full programme of events put on for us. Sadly, the inclement weather resulted in the daily band parade being cancelled. The pupil's restaurant was amazing and lunch scrumptious. We will build on the contact and promote the West Gift.

The 25th saw the annual Pancake Race organised by the Soroptimists. There was a fantastic turn out thanks to all the councillors who took part, three teams in all. Remember winning is not everything. Thanks also to the inimitable Gary Poulson for his compering.

It was a pleasure to welcome a group of children and teachers from Les Hermites to the Town Hall. The Hermitage Twin Towns Group had requested the visit. They were fascinated by our history and traditions. Above all they enjoyed trying on the robes.

I think the event of 27th was a first for a Mayor of Newbury. We were invited to The House of Lords for an official Drinks Reception by Berkshire Youth Trust. This was a fund-raising launch by the crossbench peer Lord St John of Bletso. It was particularly in support of the Waterside project.

The 28th saw the 8th Annual Get Berkshire Active Awards which are all about young people and their supporters. Another of those events that illustrate just how active and committed our young people are. A highlight for me was the honour of presenting our own Derek Peale former head of Park House with a special award for service to young people.

Words fail me in praise of the South Wales Male Voice Choir at St Nicholas church on 29th. The after party was as good as the concert - they never know when to stop. The poignant moments of the concert were the piece they dedicated to our colleague Tony Hiller.

One of the more unusual events was the Gracewell Retirement Home's Crufts Dog Show. Friends and relatives of residents came along with their dogs. We all gathered in the gardens where an agility course had been set out for the dogs. However, as they were family pets rather than show animals the owners were often those going through hoops and crawling through tunnels trying to encourage the pooches to follow. As a member of the judging panel, I then had the unenviable task of judging the competition.

During this time Rod Thomason one of our Mace Bearers had a stroke. I am pleased to say that he is at home and recovering well. We also had the unexpected and sad death of our colleague Tony Hiller. Along with the CEO, some staff colleagues and Cllr. Jeff Beck we were able to go to the crematorium and standing outside taking part in the service.

The Civic Manager and Mayor's Office has remained busy. We launched chats with the Mayor during April these are organised through the Civic Manager Individuals or organisations request a call from the Mayor who makes a prearranged call mainly to elderly self-isolating people. The amount of goodwill and kindness that has been demonstrated throughout Newbury during this difficult time has been amazing. Since March we have sent over 110 letters to recognise the positive contributions of residents that have been made to the community. Our total number of letters during the 2019/20 municipal year, so far, is 179 - so more than half of these have been sent during the Coronavirus pandemic which is incredible.

Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

16th June 2020

We continue to write letters of thanks to all the amazing volunteers helping during this crisis. They include businesses large and small, charities and individuals. It is particularly encouraging to have so many businesses stepping up at a time when they are under great financial pressure themselves. There have also been some mayors phone chats and birthday wishes.

The High Sheriff requested that we forward her the names of any organisations or individuals that deserved recognition for their efforts. She was looking to recognise the unsung heroes who work quietly helping others. They will receive a letter of thanks and hopefully one day be invited to a celebratory event.

We are continuing to talk with West Berkshire Women's Aid and Time 2 Talk about funding raising possibilities. Lots more zooms!

On June 11th I visited Ruth Saunders to wish her a Happy 104th birthday it was an occasion I could not let pass by. I went along to her home with my nephew Yuri. We stood at a safe distance and Yuri played Happy Birthday on the Violin. A few neighbours and family also stood spaced around. She is an incredible person.

Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

19th October 2020

When we last met in June of this year the expectation was that the Coronavirus situation would be much improved by now. Alas, we are far from where we had hoped to be. To meet my commitment as Mayor I decided that a change in how the Mayor operates was needed. I therefore became proactive rather than reactive. In normal times the Mayor responds to requests to attend engagements from charities, businesses, services etc. Also to be the representative of Newbury at all civic events.

Initially there were very few requests and Civic events such as VE Day and the Mayor's Drive were cancelled. Once we began to emerge from the lockdown, I kept an eye on re-openings of retail, then hospitality and lastly entertainment. I thanked managers and staff for the efforts they were making to open and provide their services to our community. Let us remember some were having to take decisions about personal risk. Owners purchasing screens, masks, sanitizers, signs etc. To manage stock in order not to be left with large amounts if closures came again. All I could do was wish them well, thank them and let them know Newbury Town Council were behind them and ready to listen to suggestions and comment. All were grateful for the visits and thankful for the Council's support. Believing in 'put your money where your mouth is', I took it literally and did eat and moderately make my way round hospitality, restaurants etc.

The Mayor's office has continued to send letters to individuals who have contributed above and beyond to the community, raised funds for charity or for personal achievements. Eighty-three have been published on our web site since June 1st. We also offered chats with the Mayor by phone. The service is open to all and is still on offer. The idea is to reach those unable to leave their homes or to those who just wished to share their situation with someone outside their immediate circle.

In the last month, more requests have started to come in. I have been invited to several virtual AGM's: Citizens Advice, Time To Talk, Samaritans, Home Start and I attended the Belonging Project event on webinar.

A few photo calls have been requested over the months. It was lovely to meet with Florence a primary school pupil who was concerned about dog poo. She had developed a scheme to place poo bags in containers she made and put on dog walking routes. The most recent was at the independent optometrist Valerie Jerome celebrating having been selected as one of the hundred top small independent businesses in the UK by Small Business Saturday UK.

I opened Laundromat Speed Queen in Boundary Road a high-tech laundrette. I visited Sebastian's Charity Trust shop in Kennet Centre, a charity supporting families who have seriously ill children. They cancelled the official opening ceremony to keep crowd gathering down. The opening of the new Lidl store at the retail park was a slight

challenge as I had to be there at 06:45. My thanks to Ian Campbell, Mayor's Attendant for driving in from Bedwyn to collect me at 06:30. I took part in a promotion video sponsored by the BID and Newbury Town Council to promote Newbury as a destination for retail and pleasure. I await the release with anticipation. We organised a very successful Treasure Hunt to raise funds for the Mayor's Benevolent fund and other charities.

Of course everything is not going as we might have hoped. Businesses have closed. However as my report illustrates some new ones are also opening and more are in the pipeline. Let us continue to shop local and support the vulnerable in our town.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all my fellow Councillors who have taken on extra issues and given so generously of you time over recent months. We must not forget you are all volunteers. To our CEO Hugh Peacocke and the whole staff team including those who support our allotments and Friends' groups. They have all gone over and beyond their roles and I know it has not been easy setting up and working from home. Finally to the people of Newbury you have been wonderful in doing so much to support others and provide services.

Let us keep positive, keep up the good work and eventually come out of this stronger.

Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

1st February 2021

My second term continues to very different from the usual mayoral agenda. It has been both exciting and challenging. Along with the Civic Manager the Mayor's Office has been innovative in seeking to support the community it serves and promote the work of Newbury Town Council. I would like to thank The Civic Manager Elisa Adams for the work she has done in seeking ways to promote our activities and raise funds for the Mayors Benevolent Fund.

We continue to send letters from the Mayor to individuals, businesses and charities that are doing great charitable work or achieving in their field. Even in these difficult times there is much to celebrate in Newbury.

Performance has never been one of my skills it was not something I had expected to be doing as Mayor. Over recent months I think my videos have improved however the viewers are the judge of that. I took part in the following videos:

BID Shop Local Newbury is Open for Business. A great film show casing all Newbury has to offer in, shopping, leisure, entertainment and retail. Sadly, everything is yet again closed.

Swift Louise Purton Toy Appeal, which ensures disadvantaged children in the area do not go without a present at Christmas . This year's appeal was more important than ever – particularly with many families facing financial hardship due to the coronavirus pandemic. I co-starred with Bartholomew, the Mayor's bear, in this production.

Many of you will have seen the virtual Light Switch On. It was a strange experience as it is usually a huge, lively event in our Market Place. Doing the countdown in an empty Council Chamber with the Civic Manager was surreal. Enough of trade secrets.

Berkshire Youth 80th Birthday. BY embarked on an ambitious and successful project to film 80 people contributing online to celebrate the event. It was an honour to be part of it.

The final video was my Christmas Message. There were a few versions as the national circumstances and regulations around Christmas kept changing. I hope all those who viewed it found it struck the right note.

I continued to involve the community in designing the Mayor's Christmas Card. We ran an online competition with the support of the Newbury Weekly News. There were three age groups to engage as many people as possible. Luckily, we were able to do a photo call

and present the prize to the winner outside the Town Hall. We were delighted to discover the winner was a doctor at our hospital. She decided to donate her prize to the hospital raffle.

The Civic Manager organised the usual Benevolent Fund Christmas raffle with a company that services online raffles. It worked out well and £335.00 was raised.

We have just completed the Pin Badge competition, again all done online. It is a new Civic Award Category addressing the efforts made by individuals during the pandemic. More about it next time.

No doubt everyone will have read about the amazing 104-year old Ruth Saunders and her marathon walk to raise funds for Thames Valley Air Ambulance. It was an honour to accompany her on the last lap around her block and then attend the final lap. It took place at Newbury Racecourse in the Winners Enclosure. I was given the honour of presenting her with her marathon badge.

Remembrance Day was another challenge for our Civic Manager. It was managed excellently and live streamed by Kennet Radio. Many thanks to all who assisted and the individuals who attended on invitation.

As is traditional I attended the annual memorial service at Greenham Control Tower Gardens on 12th December to remember the American Airmen who died.

I did get to attend the opening night of the Christmas pantomime at the Corn Exchange. One of the lucky few as within a few days it had to close.

The town was greatly honoured to welcome HRH Earl of Wessex on December 3rd. He visited the Corn Exchange and our Charter Market. It was a somewhat inclement day as the rain kept falling. This did not dampen the spirits the traders were all delighted. HRH spoke with every trader, tried samples to taste when offered and accepted some produce gifts He was well informed about the current difficulties producers are experiencing and interested in environmental issues, speaking about his bees and wilding meadows. Other events attended physically or virtually from October 20th, 2020:

Lord Lieutenants Awards - Virtually

Opening of Globe - Physically

Fair Close Day Centre - Physically

Riverside food distribution - Physically

Xtract Thatcham Queens Awards for Industry in presence of Kit Malthouse Minister for Industry - Physically

Dingley Promise AGM - Virtually

Community Interest Company presentation - Virtually

Blossom Fields planting - Physically

Lockdown Wood planting Goldwell Park - Physically

I continue to be thankful to all Council staff and councillors for your support to the Mayor's Office and our community. I also thank the people of Newbury for all their

efforts to keep life on track and support each other. Please keep it up. The vaccine roll out will continue and life will improve for us all.

Elizabeth O’Keeffe – Mayor of Newbury

Town Mayor's Report to Full Council

4th May 2021

After two contrasting years I have finally come to my last report to Full Council as Mayor. There is less to report given that the period covered Easter and a spell in hospital for me. Although it was only a minor surgery the Covid regulations of course included two weeks self-isolation pre operation followed by not being able to walk for two further weeks.

A number of Mayors' letters were composed and posted on the Town Council web site. I continue to be concerned about how many people view these and that many of the people we congratulate may well not be aware of the letters.

The zoom events continued. I attended a Community United event promoting the Covid vaccine take up with an emphasis on the hard to reach and need to communicate with some of our communities in languages other than English. The High Sheriff's Community Awards Ceremony was also held with zoom. Individuals who had contributed to events and assisted as volunteers during this Covid year were recognised.

We judged and awarded our Newbury Town Council Awards via zoom and video. The judges met on zoom to complete the ever-difficult task of trying to decide on a winner in each category. Given Newbury has such a caring, active, and committed community it was not easy. This task was followed by each judge meeting with the Civic Manager and a recording team to film the winners' announcements. I must thank Gary Poulson of the Volunteer Centre for his assistance. At the time I was still unable to walk however there is always a solution to a problem. Gary kindly agreed to ride a mobility scooter from the store to my house and accompanied me as I rode to the venue to make the video. The video was advertised and streamed on Newbury Town Council site. The winners met individually with the Mayor on April 28 and 29th for individual photographs to be taken. Many thanks to our innovative Civic Manager who is ever a 'woman with a plan.'

Elisa Adams as Civic Manager also worked on an application to the National Association of Civic Officers' who were running their Civic Office of the Year competition. Awards were to civic offices for efforts made in reaching out to communities, supporting local businesses, and showing the voluntary efforts being made by so many people. We were commended for our efforts. I must stress that this happened because of her work on the entry.

We also had our Annual Town Meeting on 22nd March again on our old friend zoom. I am happy to say that the Green Spaces Working Group under the Community Services Committee in this period have organised two more planting days. On 20th March Cllrs and volunteers scattered wildflower seeds at the edge of Victoria Park. On 18th April a Commemorative garden was planted at Old Hospital Green, on

Andover Road with herbs, shrubs, and plants, widely known for their medicinal qualities. I only wish we had sites that were easier to dig.

I have continued to visit our vibrant market. I pay thanks to them all for staying with us throughout this difficult year. They have been there through all weathers. The 12th April was of course a day of excitement as non-essential retail and eating outside opened again. I must admit to using this event as the last opportunity to wear the Civic Robes and Chain. Cllr Billy Drummond and I met up with the BID officers at 10:00. We then set off on a tour of Parkway, Northbrook St, and Bartholomew St. Attempting to visit every venue that was opening again for the first time since the last lockdown. We completed our tour some 4 hours later. All the venue managers and staff were delighted to be serving their customers again. Long may it last, keep to the rules and keep going forward must be the message.

Cllr Drummond and I stood on the Town Hall steps for one minute silence on 23rd March for the National Day of Reflection. It is with sadness that as I end my term my last official civic engagement was on the occasion of the passing of HRH Prince Philip Duke of Edinburgh. I was privileged to attend and read at the Commemoration Service at St Nicholas Church on 16th April. Cllr Drummond and I again stood on the steps on Saturday 13th April for the observation of one minute silence as HRH coffin was carried into St Georges Chapel Windsor.

There will be time for thanking people fully at the Civic Mayor Making on 27TH June. However, I wish to just mention a few as I stand down. The Civic Manager Elisa Adams who has been so supportive and always thinks on her feet. Having been appointed in summer 2019 she has yet to experience a full Mayor's year of usual engagements. The CEO Hugh Peacocke who was always available and ready to advise and support. Mr Ian Campbell ever at the Mayor's side on official engagements an encyclopaedia of knowledge. To the Council leader Cllr Martin Colston and all my fellow Councillors. You are a great team working hard together for the good of our town. Lastly to the people of Newbury and the many charities and businesses who make Newbury the place it is.

Elizabeth O'Keeffe, Mayor of Newbury