

# **WITNEY ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2022**

## **REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING FROM THE MAYOR**

### **CLLR JOY AITMAN**

Witney is an amazing town, and it has been a privilege to serve as its mayor for the last two years. I am so grateful to the officers and the councillors for their support and incredibly hard work in this unprecedented time. You can see that hard work reflected in the reports of the hard-working chairs which you will shortly be hearing, and the way in which we are rebounding from the pandemic.

I would like to firstly just say how pleased I am to be making this speech in such wonderful surroundings, getting the refurbishment right has taken a lot of work and will be enjoyed by the many clubs and societies which lacked somewhere suitable. I was so proud of the team who made this room come alive for the citizen of the year ceremony earlier this month

It has seemed to me that one of the unexpected outcomes of the pandemic is that the town and its communities have been united in their support for each other like never before. The officers and individual councillors have worked their socks off to facilitate this. They have given time, space, and limitless energy, without question and all while looking after their own families, to make sure we were all safe. There are not enough words to express the fullness of my thanks. Thank you all.

My role definitely wasn't business as usual, and I won't list everything that was postponed or cancelled but I will rejoice in everything that actually took place. Sometimes differently and sometimes online. People were generous in support of my charities, but as with so many the cost-of-living pandemic hampered this, but I did my best to support them in other ways. Our inspirational youth leaders at Got2be and the amazing young people they support have brought insight into the needs of the youth of our town. Home-start have opened my eyes to the increasing problems faced by families over the last decade and Guideposts have brought so much laughter in dark times. I will be continuing with my support of these groups throughout the coming year. They made me feel like one of their family.

Being allowed back into schools again has been a long-awaited sign of returning normality. From being a judge in a world record breaking musical bumps attempt to opening a new library. I know it is a cliché, but children really are our future and Witney is going to be in safe hands.

I have represented Witney round the county too. It is important for us to be seen and, also to learn from the others that we share Oxfordshire with. The mayoral chain and I have been on many adventures and I am relieved to return it and its new case intact. These events have included working with the Oxford City Lord Mayor and attending a number of events with the Lord Lieutenant and her deputies and working with the Sheriffs of Oxford past and present. This has been an important networking opportunity and I have been impressed with the

support they provide to caring organisations and young entrepreneurs in and around the county.

For obvious reasons Twin Town activities have been limited to local planning and community events. Our Deputy Mayor, Liz Duncan, represented us at the Remembrance Service in Unterhaching and I am looking forward to starting the Witney to Le Touquet car rally in a couple of days' time. The bond remains strong and supportive.

My mayoral term started with the care of the freshly planted tiny Forest, which has flourished and become a favourite spot for many and is now the first amongst 30 or so around the country. Now as my Mayoral term ends I have had a flurry of tree planting for the Queen's Green Canopy. It gives me great pleasure to know that these trees will be a lasting legacy for our town of an amazing, hardworking monarch.

Finally, I would like to thank the town for their support and trusting me to take part in their events. I have made many new friends and I know these friendships will be lasting because that is the kind of town Witney is. Thank you.

**Cllr Joy Aitman, Mayor of Witney (Chair of Witney Town Council)**