

Mayor of Sleaford's Speech

ANNUAL SLEAFORD TOWN MEETING

Wednesday 1st May 2019

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen, fellow Councillors, those from other authorities, members of staff and, most importantly, members of the public and welcome to the Sleaford Town meeting of 2019.

I have enjoyed the role of Mayor supported by my fellow Councillors in our decision making at Town Council meetings and representing the Town at Civic Events. Over the year I have chaired some interesting meetings and some significant decisions have been made affecting the town

I would like to thank my wife Carole for joining me in attending many civic events staged in other towns and districts of Lincolnshire, and local RAF stations. In total we attended fifty five events over the year and Cllr Adrian Snookes, as my deputy, and his wife Alison have attended others on our behalf and I thank them for representing Sleaford in this valuable way.

My appointment as Mayor was a little unexpected but having made the decision not to stand in this week's election for another four year term well in advance, I realised that this would be my last opportunity to serve Sleaford in this capacity and so agreed to the request of a number of my colleagues to stand for election to the post.

It is usual for the incoming Mayor to disclose on appointment their priorities for the term of office and what charity they intend to support. I wanted to support two practical groups with which I have been involved over the years, one working with the elderly and one with young people. Evergreen provide support for the elderly by befriending those who live alone and the Boys' and Girls' Brigade work with under 18's, helping them to grow as good citizens. It has been a pleasure to support and promote the work of both Evergreen and the 1st Sleaford Boys and Girls' Brigade based at the Riverside Church in Sleaford. It has been an inspiration to see how many young people have developed in confidence and older people regain their confidence throughout the year.

Carole and I were very privileged to support the Town Twinning Association and were able to visit Fredesdorf-Vogelsdorf in August and host six

French visitors from Marquette la Lille in October as part of the reciprocal visit in October.

In my position as Mayor of Sleaford, I have been able to play an active role in encouraging local organisations in Sleaford to join together for the benefit of the environment and local communities. The meetings have been successful, and I know that this is something that the Town Council will continue to support even when I am no longer Mayor.

I have also been joint chairman of the Sleaford Castle Development Group. Over the year the Town Council have worked with the Civic Trust to promote the Castle and investigate how we can make it more interesting to a wider audience. Practical measures have already been implemented and exciting developments can be looked forward to in the coming years.

Switching on the Christmas lights following a very successful Christmas market was a significant highlight of the year. The Christmas light display showed Sleaford in all its glory and it was a joy to celebrate this event with all those who attended the Christmas market.

I have enjoyed representing this Council in hosting a well-received civic service at the Riverside Church, welcoming civic guests from around the county and further afield. The service was very different to those we have attended in other towns as we had modern hymns and music whilst retaining the traditions of earlier times.

Looking forward, I hope many of you will become involved in developing a Neighbourhood Plan, after something of a false start, the council has begun work again on a project that will significantly affect those communities that live and work in Sleaford and Kirkby La Thorpe. The Neighbourhood Plan will ultimately assist in ensuring we create a place that people wish to visit, live and be part of.