

**Outgoing Chairman's Announcements
County Council AGM - Friday 29 May 2020**

Honorary Alderman, Distinguished Guests, friends and colleagues, ladies, and gentlemen, who are present today; albeit virtually.

Thank you for your support, not just today but throughout the past year.

During these challenging times, I first wish to pay tribute to our local community who have responded so well to the Coronavirus crisis and the way people have come together in such an incredible way to support the elderly and vulnerable across the County throughout these difficult and unprecedented times. I also respect and appreciate the responsible way our residents have been implementing and supporting effective social distancing as advised by the Government and Public Health England, and one cannot forget our NHS colleagues and carers in the community and essential key workers, who have been working tirelessly to support the health and wellbeing of the wider community. We are very grateful to them.

I would like to thank the Dean of Winchester, The Very Reverend Catherine Ogle, Peer-Jada Qureshi, from the Muslim community and Danny Habel, a member of the Jewish community in Winchester, for saying prayers at previous County Council meetings.

I was privileged to have had Councillor Roy Perry, our former Leader at Hampshire County Council and our present Leader, Councillor Keith Mans, advising me with such clarity and such depth of knowledge.

The Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Nigel Atkinson, has been incredibly supportive directing the five royal visits which I was privileged to attend.

A big thank you to Natalie Jones, the Chairman's PA, for pointing me in the right direction and for managing my diary efficiently, god knows I needed it! Also, to Debbie Vaughan and Jo Weeks in Democratic and Members Services for their help and support.

The Chairman-Chief Executive relationship is an important one, with the huge amount of work that is put in by John Coughlan. I would like to pay tribute to this and to thank John and the Corporate Management team for all their work for Hampshire County Council. I would also like to thank all the officers who work with such dedication - what we have achieved would not have been possible without them.

I must also express my public thanks to my consort and wife, Gul Choudhary, as well as Attika, my daughter, and to Mrs Claire BurrIDGE who kindly supported on many other occasions. I could not have done this without their support, thank you.

This past year has been extraordinary. It has been an enormous privilege for me to represent you at events around the County and it has been an honour to broadcast the Hampshire message.

It is difficult to know what to include and what to leave out as I look back over my year as Chairman. The year was understandably cut short with Covid-19 and many main

events cancelled. However, I would like to share some reflections grouped around some themes: remembrance, forging alliances and promoting positive mental health and wellbeing, which was my chosen Chairman's theme this year.

On 10th October 2019, World Mental Health Day, we held a conference at Ashburton Hall. The event allowed us to discuss opportunities for collaboration and partnership to help promote better mental wellbeing and stem the rise in mental health across Hampshire. Hampshire County Council, in its commitment to inspire better mental health across Hampshire, was a signatory to Public Health England's campaign to improve our nation's mental wellbeing, known as "Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health Initiative." We understandably, had to cancel a further conference that was planned in April 2020. We cannot forget that mental health affects everyone in society and the mental health of our community must be valued now, more than ever. It is our responsibility, as a Council, to ensure people know that they are not alone. It is important that we continue to ask service users and carers and to learn from them about how we involve them in what we do.

I would like to say a huge thank you to Simon Bryant, Director of Public Health, for helping me to achieve my goal promoting Mental Health.

As we delved back into our history, the 75th anniversary of the D-Day Landings was held on Sunday the 2 June 2019 at Lepe Country Park. Lepe played a significant role in Operation Overlord in the run up to D-Day and there is still physical evidence of this heritage on site and much local interest in this aspect of our history. It was a privilege to have been part of this historic event in British history.

I have met many amazing people from all walks of life, whilst carrying out my duties. Volunteers and leaders are a fundamental part of retaining the vitality that exists in Hampshire. It was humbling to meet so many volunteers and gaining a true insight of how truly life-changing their work can be.

You have all been sent my list of engagements throughout my term of office.

There are some key highlights that I wish to mention:

The first being my Chairman's Concert at the Anvil on Sunday the 8 March 2020. Many Civic Heads and County Councillors across Hampshire attended what was truly a spectacular event and one that I will never forget. Hampshire County Youth Orchestra performed a rich and varied programme supported by Arts Council England and Department for Education. I trust we will all continue to support the Hampshire Music Service.

Other notable events include:

- HRH The Princess Royal visit to the Hovercraft Museum, Lee on the Solent on the 26 June 2019.
- HRH The Prince of Wales official opening of the new Centenary Garden at Exbury Gardens on the 10 July 2019.
- The 25 and 40-year long service celebrations

- Visit to the Men's Shed at New Milton on the 18 February 2020.

I was invited along with Steve Brine, MP for Winchester, to attend the Defence College of Logistics, Policing and Administration, hosted by Brigadier Mike Caldicott CBE on the 28 February 2020. It was great to see the college at Worthy Down in Winchester and to hear of the training opportunities that are offered across the country.

These are just a few of the events I attended during my year of office and many, if not all, were amazing in various ways but what stood out most of all was the dedication and commitment of all the people involved, many of whom are volunteers.

Being the Chairman of this wonderful County of Hampshire has been one of the biggest honours of my life. What a great thing to have done. What I have tried to do, at every opportunity, is to make sure everyone that I interacted with knew they were an important part of our community and were appreciated, because, after all, that is the Hampshire way.

Finally, I would like to thank you, the members, for what you do for Hampshire in a variety of ways, and for all your support to me as Chairman.

I wish my successor well in the future and may our Council continue to go from strength to strength.

Now, over to Debbie Vaughan for apologies.