

MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL



2021-2025
Civic Report

Civic Roles

Mayor

Marlborough has a history of Mayors dating back to 1310. Each Mayor wears ceremonial red robes, a tricorne hat and gold chain.

Today, the Mayor still holds a vital role within the Town. As well as attending community events the Mayor is also the chair of the Council. In Marlborough, Councillors become Mayor by being nominated and elected by fellow Councillors.

Each Mayor selects charities to support during their Mayoral term, then throughout the year they will raise money and awareness for their chosen cause. Giving back to the community is very important for the Mayor.

Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is the Proper Officer and Responsible Financial Officer of the Council. The Town Clerk completes the Civic party to ensure propriety and guidance to the Council as a whole. They have a key relationship working with the Mayor, supporting them in leading the council through its affairs and challenges throughout the year. The Town Clerk wears a black robe and a wig: reinforcing their requirement to ensure the Town Council carries out its duties lawfully.

Richard Spencer-Williams has been the Town Clerk since March 2021. He said: "Whenever I discuss my role with people, I explain that a Town Clerk is the 'upholder of democracy at a local level'. This requires a sense of honour, judgement, diplomacy, integrity, and good character; as well as humility and openness to learn. It has been a privilege to serve alongside all Mayors and Councillors over this council term, from whom I have learnt so much."



Deputy Mayor Councillor Emily Trow, Town Mayor Councillor Kym-Marie Cleasby and Town Clerk Richard Spencer-Williams

Deputy Mayor

The Deputy Mayor's role is to assist and support the Mayor with all their duties, and they often attend events on behalf of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor's robes are a deep royal blue.

Ordinarily, when a Councillor is elected as Deputy Mayor, they will spend a year learning about the practice and responsibilities of the Mayoral position. They will be prepared to take on the role of Mayor, should they be elected in the next Mayoral Term.

Macebearers



The position of Macebearer is an honorary appointment. Our current Macebearers are Barry Mercer and Bob Dobie, and they wear maroon livery with tricorn hats. As well as civic duties, behind the scenes the Macebearers are responsible for the proper care of the Maces as well as of all other civic insignia and robes – ensuring they are kept in good order and having authority for the repair of any damage they may sustain. ‘Insignia’ refers to the dress chains and badges worn by the Town Mayor and should not be confused with ‘Regalia’ which is restricted to Royal accoutrements.

More precisely titled the ‘Serjeants-at-Mace’, the Macebearers are literally people who bear a mace. As the Mace is the emblem of the Mayor’s authority, it precedes them in procession – and so the Macebearers walk immediately in front of the Mayor. When being carried in procession the Mace should be carried at the "slope" (to use an army expression) on the right shoulder, unless two Maces are used in which case the Macebearer on the Mayor's right carries the Mace on the right shoulder and the Macebearer on the Mayor's left carries the Mace on the left shoulder. If HM The King or HM The Queen is the Royal Visitor the Mace(s) must be carried reversed.

They may also, if appropriately qualified, act as Toastmaster at Mayoral Banquets and Receptions.



Town Beadle



Linda Illsley has been our Beadle since May 2024.

The Beadle is a town official whose job is to summon Marlborough parishioners to various meetings and lead processions into church along with multiple other duties. Sometimes called ‘constables’, Beadles were originally officers who carried poles or staves so that they could, with these weapons, keep order on all occasions where the Mayor was present, and clear a passage for the Mayor and those with them.

In the past, duties may have included carrying out punishments, such as whipping and/or placing people in the stocks or pillories. Just like the other Officers, to signify their role the Town Beadle wears ceremonial green robes with a tricorn hat.

Town Crier

Emma Kimber has been our Town Crier since May 2024. Marlborough has had a Town Crier since at least 1204, whose job is to read proclamations and to make announcements about the town. Wearing a distinctive blue and red jacket, the Town Crier rings a bell and begins announcements with the cry “Oyez, Oyez, Oyez”. In modern times there is no legal obligation to read such proclamations but it is a tradition that is still observed in many towns.

For Emma, a sense of responsibility and duty has always run through her veins, with most of her family working in public service.

Civic Events

Mayor Making

A new Mayor is elected each year at the Annual Town Council meeting

Mark Cooper (2021-2022)

Lisa Farrell (2022-2023)

Nicholas Fogg MBE FRSA (2023-2024)

Kym-Marie Cleasby (2024-2025)



Freedom Parade

7 October 2021

The parade marked a decade since 4 Military Intelligence Battalion (4MI) was granted the Freedom of Marlborough in 2011, and it exercised its freedom with a ceremonial march through the town to [mark 20 years](#) since the battalion's formation



Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

31 May 2022

To celebrate HM Queen Elizabeth II reigning for 70 years Marlborough threw a [massive street party](#) as well as a beacon lighting, [tree planting](#) and Marlborough's very own bake off



HM King Charles III Coronation

High Street Party 6 May 2023

Another street party to celebrate a new royal era, with a children's fancy dress parade and live entertainment



Lifetime Achievement Award

On Tuesday 30 April 2024, in the presence of invited guests and Councillors, Robert Hiscox was presented with a [lifetime achievement award](#) by the Mayor of Marlborough, Councillor Nicholas Fogg MBE.

Robert Hiscox is a sponsor and supporter of local businesses: in the past he has saved the White Horse Bookshop, sponsored Jazz and Literature Festivals, and he was instrumental in the opening of The Parade Cinema





The Merchant's House Peppercorn Rent Ceremony

An annual Ceremony where the Chair of the Trustees hands over a ceremonial bag of peppercorns to our Mayor as rent for the building which is owned by the Town Council. On 5 October 2021 the Merchant's House celebrated its 30-year anniversary

Marlborough Mop

The Showman's Guild takes over our High Street every October with the little mop and big mop fairs. On the first weekend the Mayor is invited to open the fair, then they and any children with them can ride for free



Remembrance



Each year on Remembrance Sunday there is a Parade from the High Street to the war memorial, attended by soldiers from 4MI Battalion, veterans, the Royal British Legion, youth groups, emergency services, charitable organisations, funeral directors, dignitaries and Town Councillors. On Armistice Day Councillors observe a 2-minute silence lay wreaths at the 7th Wiltshire Regiment Memorial in London Road, and the Mayor lays poppy posies on war graves

Christmas Lights Switch On

Marking the start of Marlborough's festive season, in late November there's a Christmas market, Santa's grotto and street entertainment. Father Christmas and the Mayor take a ride in Marlborough Lions' Sleigh and the town joins together to count down to the big switch-on



Marlborough College Carol Service

Councillors are invited by the Master to attend this annual service in December, and they process into the chapel behind the Officers of Dignity

TOWN MAYORS

Mark Cooper 2021-2022

On 6 May we began a new four-year Council term after an uncontested election, and I had the honour and privilege of serving for a second year as Marlborough's Mayor.

Of the 16 Councillors, 11 returned for another term, while five new Councillors joined. This meant that the Council had an excellent blend of experience and fresh ideas, giving the Council a renewed focus on the importance of responding to the needs of local residents.

Three of the new Councillors were also Wiltshire Councillors: this led to the Town Council having an important voice in County Hall.

In July, long serving Councillor and former Mayor, Councillor Bryan Castle sadly passed away. Councillor Castle was an exceptional Councillor whose service to the local community will be remembered and cherished by the people of Marlborough for many years to come.



Councillor Mark Luson was co-opted to the Council in December to fill the vacancy created by Councillor Castle's passing, and very quickly proved to be a huge asset.

In January the Council lost the valuable services of Councillor Vanessa Hillier. Councillor Hillier worked very hard and made a great contribution, particularly during the pandemic and with staffing matters.

The highlight for me as Mayor was the re-emergence of civic events as we came out of the pandemic, and the chance for Marlborough once again to demonstrate its commitment to its community.

As a Marlborough boy from two longstanding Marlborough families, it was such an honour to take part in events as Mayor that I had seen growing up as a child, such as everyone coming out to pay respects on Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

To open the Mop Fair and see its return after Covid was a great highlight, matched by having the honour of switching on the Christmas lights. To see my home town packed with people enjoying the lights was a memory I will never forget.

I also had the great privilege of welcoming and taking the salute as 4 Military Intelligence Battalion marched down the High Street as they exercised their right to march through the town. Later that evening I had the honour of representing the town at a regimental dinner. As an added bonus before the parade, I also met the TV personality Timmy Mallet who gave me invaluable advice on public speaking!!



Lisa Farrell 2022-2023

Being Mayor was an absolute honour for me, and even more so to be made Mayor twice, enabling me to work hard for the people in the community where I live by representing them in the best way I can.

I have to say, working full time and being a Mayor was very hard work and I struggled from time-to-time, especially if there was often more than one Mayoral event scheduled in a single day.

However, my employer, Marlborough College, was always very supportive of me during my times as Mayor, and I thank them wholeheartedly for that.

None of this would have worked so well without the support of the hardworking Council staff, and of my amazing husband and family. I hope they were all proud of me and what I managed to achieve during my times as Mayor.



Also, what kept me going was the wonderful feedback I had from the community in regards to bringing Marlborough together - it made me feel more positive going forward.

My highlights are too many to name, but over the two occasions when I was Mayor they include: lighting the beacon on the Common, meeting Japanese students, Christmas lights switch-on, meeting all the amazing volunteers that do so much in the background of our community, working closely with all the local sports clubs who help young people gain so much from partaking in sport, opening Coopers Meadow play area, and working with ARK who do a great job of improving and protecting our waterways. From my first term as Mayor (2018-2019), visiting the

Gurkha wives in Bulford stands out in my memory, helping me to understand how much military wives and families need our support, especially when their partners are away - that is why we must always remember and support them.

Working on the Jubilee event was hard work, but Marlborough and the surrounding areas came together that day - I think I cried more than once, especially with my special guests, some of whom were over 90 years old: their smiles said it all and made it worth all the hard work on the day. I received so many warm words and a lovely letter of thanks after the event... it was quite emotional.

Being the Mayor and a Town Councillor can be hard work, but anyone can do it if they believe they can make a difference, and with the right reasons do their best for the community they live in.



Nicholas Fogg MBE FRSA 2023-2024

Things seem to happen when I become Mayor. Like the first Coronation for 71 years!

We celebrated it in style. The Parade Cinema screened the whole ceremony. Thanks to the hard work of the Town Council staff and all the others who contributed, we put on the Big Lunch, the biggest party in the county and even in the entire country: well, that's what the BBC said.

In the High Street many a loyal glass was raised to our new Monarch. The bandstand was occupied by a procession of talent, including local boy made good, Ben Cipolla. The occasion was honoured by a visit from the Lord Lieutenant, the King's representative in this county. She was hotfoot from the Coronation ceremony, in which she had participated as the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting. And the day wasn't over. That evening, the Marlborough Concert Orchestra



joined forces with the Choral Society to present a splendid programme of Coronation music.

To ensure that the local kids had a souvenir of the great occasion, Marlborough Town Council presented each one with a special mug. I presented these at Preshute and Marlborough St. Mary's Primary Schools. One boy immediately dropped his which shattered with a great crash. We found him another one.



The role of the Mayor in today's world is rather the reverse of Stanley Baldwin's famous definition of a harlot: 'power without responsibility', but to that mix you can add influence. In my three spells as Mayor of Marlborough I began a jazz festival – regarded as one of the biggest events of its kind in the UK - co-founded Open Studios, an event that enables people to visit artists in their workplaces, and I started the literature festival, which now compares with the best in the land.

Knowing that the arts are an area where I could exercise influence, in each mayoral year, I've appointed an artist-in-residence. I took a view of Marlborough by the first one, Bryan Hanlon, to Marlborough, New Zealand, where it hangs proudly in their council chamber. Ricky Demarco, mainstay of the Edinburgh Festival for 60 years, made the entire town a gallery with artists creating works in the shop windows. The third was the royal artist, Rupert Alexander, who decided to paint my portrait. His previous sitters include the late Queen and the current King. I'm proud of it: as far as I know, the first of a Mayor in all his finery in the Marlborough's 820-year history.



Not that there aren't problems – a report on traffic conditions commissioned by Marlborough Town Council predicted that the town would suffer complete logjam within a few years with all the effects of fury and pollution unless traffic levels were reduced. Increased residents' parking would be a step in the right direction. Let's go for it!

Kym-Marie Cleasby 2024-2025

Since assuming the role of Mayor of Marlborough in May 2024 I have followed up on my commitment to community engagement, historical preservation, and addressing pressing local issues.

One of my primary objectives has been to honour the unsung heroes of Marlborough. Drawing from my personal experiences of overcoming hardship, I chose Love Marlborough Kids Meals as my charity of the year. Love Marlborough Kids Meals, an initiative I founded during the COVID-19 lockdown, provides free hot meals to families in need, ensuring that children receive nutritious food without stigma. Reflecting on my own upbringing, I understand the challenges faced by vulnerable families. The project has been superbly led in recent times by Cath Williams, a tireless advocate for the struggling families in our town. In February I held a Valentines Charity Ball which raised more than £5,000 for this charity.

This year we will be celebrating many other Community heroes in Marlborough and Manton with the Community Champion Awards designed to honour those who make a significant impact across various aspects of community life.

Recognising the decline in the number of stallholders post-pandemic, I, with a working group made up of councillors, traders and other interested parties have taken proactive steps to rejuvenate Marlborough's 800-year-old market. We emphasised the need to view the market in a "new and fresh light" and launched an online survey in September 2024 to gather residents' input on desired stalls, promotion and improvements.

The historic market, held twice weekly for hundreds of years, is a cornerstone of Marlborough's identity, offering fresh produce, artisan goods, and more. By engaging the community in its revitalisation, we seek to ensure its continued relevance and success.

Traffic congestion has been a longstanding issue in Marlborough, with the convergence of two A-roads leading to gridlock and safety concerns. I have been vocal about the need for strategic interventions, particularly advocating for the "de-priming" of the A346 to reduce heavy commercial traffic.



A study commissioned by the Town Council highlighted that local improvements alone would not suffice, recommending broader network management strategies. I continue to collaborate with Wiltshire Council and National Highways to seek sustainable solutions for the town's traffic woes.

The D-Day beacon lighting event in June was a deeply moving time, remembering those who fought and died in the Second World War. It was so poignant to see so many people at the Common, remembering family members and one or two who had taken part in D-Day.



Similarly, Remembrance Sunday holds a special place in Marlborough's annual calendar. As Mayor, I had the honour of inspecting the troops including Scouts, Guides and more! I had the privilege of leading the wreath-laying ceremony to pay tribute to the fallen.

Addressing the housing crisis has been another focal point. In response to rising property prices and the scarcity of affordable homes, we declared a housing emergency, resulting in a resolution that any development of multiple homes should have an affordable element. This underscores the Council's commitment to ensuring that residents can continue to live in the town amidst escalating housing costs.



Mop Fairs in Marlborough are a long-standing tradition, held annually in October. These historic hiring fairs, now vibrant funfairs, are officially opened by the Mayor of Marlborough alongside representatives from the Showmen's Guild. The event brings excitement to the town with thrilling rides, amusements, and a festive atmosphere, and the sun shone on all the town's children getting free rides. The Mop fairs celebrate both history and community spirit.



Michael Tupman MBE

Our former Town Crier died in January 2024.

Mike brought dignity, humour and kindness to every event, and he is sadly missed by the wider community as well as all at Marlborough Town Council.

Before taking on the Town Crier role, Mike was a well-known and much-loved special constable in the town. "The town has lost one of its great characters" said Marlborough Mayor, Nicholas Fogg. "As a long-serving Special Constable he was always available, always fair, always firm. As Town Crier he had the most resonant voice I recall ever hearing, bringing his sense of humour to every occasion. We will miss him deeply".



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