

Chairman of Council report – Council Meeting **26 July 2024**

Since our last meeting we have had the General Election with three of our councillors standing as candidates in our two constituencies. Our congratulations to Cllr Ellie Chowns on her successful election as the Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire and we all look forward to working with her and Jesse Norman for the people of our County.

Last month saw the passing of one of our longest serving councillors Bob Mathews. Bob was dedicated to local government serving both on Herefordshire Council and one of its predecessors South Hereford District; a strong Independent member he led the Independent group for many years. He was a caring politician not afraid to argue a case and champion many local causes.



Last month Armed Forces week was celebrated around the county with the raising of the flag in High town and a special commemoration event held in Bromyard including a march past with the Lord Lieutenant taking the salute.

Herefordshire has over 2,500 serving officers with over 11,000 forces children educated in our county. We have high levels of veterans in our communities with an estimated 9,600 members of which 14% are female and half are under the age of 65.

There is much support for veterans and as a council we are very supportive of initiatives particularly the Armed Forces Covenant with Cllr Stoddart as our lead member. There is a veterans centre in Hereford which following a recent lottery grant will now open five days a week.

The contribution of the defence and security sector to our local economy should not be underestimated.

If you want to know more on how you can support as a local councillor speak to Cllr Stoddart or visit <https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/armed-forces/herefordshire-armed-forces-covenant-partnership/2>

Since the last council meeting I have attended two British Empire Medal presentations, met with and attended installation of mayors, various armed forces events, various community activities and citizenship swearing ceremonies.