

## PRESS RELEASE

**Title:** 'Community Mayor'  
**Date:** 17th January 2020  
**Prepared By:** Town Clerk



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As residents of the Town will be aware, the Town Council organised for an independent audit of the Council's working practices in late 2019 which highlighted a number of financial irregularities. The audit also raised concerns about the legality of the Community Mayor role.

The Community Mayor initiative was designed to move the figurehead of the Town Mayor away from the Council and give the role back to the Community who would assist in selecting an individual who dedicates themselves to the Town. This community minded individual would represent the Town at events throughout Cheshire and fundraise for their chosen charities throughout their Mayoral year. Whilst advice was sought in the set-up of the role and the Councillors acted in good faith in doing so, the auditor advised that unfortunately it was not possible for the Town Council to legally create the role of Community Mayor. Subsequent advice has been received from the sectors professional bodies which supports this view and as a result the project in its current format must cease.

This is a cause of great sadness to the Town Council and of course Dave Roberts, the first Community Mayor and Linda Boden the Deputy Community Mayor. Whilst the project will cease for the present time, the Council will be looking at alternative ways in which to have a Community Representative to take on the role generally carried out by the Town Mayor, that is to be the public face of Middlewich at events throughout Cheshire.

Chairman of the Internal Committee, Helen Watkinson said *"Personally I am very sad and disappointed with this outcome but we must comply with the legislation which is there to protect the title of Mayor. The Roles that David Roberts, Lynne Hardy and Linda Boden and her husband John, carried out have been excellent. Fulfilling every expectation of what the Town residents wanted a Community Mayor to be. Thank you to all for your continued support of this project."*

It should be emphasised that the cessation of the project is no reflection on Dave Roberts, Lynne Hardy or Linda Boden who have represented the Town exceptionally over the last 6 months and whom the Council would like to thank for their time and efforts.

If you have any questions as a result of this statement, please contact the Interim Town Clerk, Lisa Benskin on 01606 833434 or email [clerk@middlewich.org.uk](mailto:clerk@middlewich.org.uk)