




alvern Town Council

Mayor of Malvern Cllr Nick Houghton
Annual Report 2022/23

Prepared by
Cllr Nick Houghton



My Mayoral year 2022/23, although not quite over is drawing to a close, and what a busy year it has been. We saw the demolition of the old pavilion at Victoria Park, an offer for the Belle Vue building accepted and the continuing development of plans for a new building at Victoria Park. We have been discussing this subject for a number of years, but the dominoes have started to fall into place and we will hopefully see a new Community Hub opening its doors in the next twelve months.


In July 2022, we saw the Commonwealth Games Baton relay come through the Town and the event organised by Malvern Town Council was very well attended, and of course managed very effectively and efficiently by the MTC office staff and Operations Team.

July also saw Malvern Town Council flying Pride Flags around town, which were warmly received and great feedback was received from the community. Malvern Town Council gave a grant to support Malvern Pride and the event in Priory Park was very well attended. MTC's Support for grant applications from organisations such as Malvern Pride clearly demonstrates its commitment that Malvern is for all.

On August bank holiday, the Mayor's Bonanza was again a huge success, thanks to the organisation and support of Town Council staff. The event was held in Victoria Park and we were pleased to see so many families attending and many of our councillors helping out on stalls. All in all it was a great day, which we hope to repeat later this year.

Malvern Town Council once again won a Gold Award in the Heart of England Bloom; a big thank you goes to the Operations Team for managing the planting and care of the flower beds and hanging baskets, especially as we experienced some long hot dry weather just before the judging. Many visitors to the town comment favourably on our floral displays and we are grateful to the many community groups that contribute to Malvern in Bloom.

In September, we were all saddened to hear of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Malvern Town Council respected the mourning of the Monarch with flags flown at half-mast on Belle Vue Terrace and at Malvern Library, and I laid an arrangement of lilies on the bandstand at Priory Park on behalf of the Town Council. We then celebrated the accession of King Charles III to the throne and it was my great privilege to hold a Proclamation ceremony marking this occasion in Rosebank Gardens



Malvern Town Council agreed to fund a dedication to the late Queen by the installation of artwork in the bus shelter at Rosebank Gardens by running a competition for anyone to enter. An extra working budget was approved to ensure the finish was appropriate for such an important dedication, but the choosing and creation of the artwork will now fall to the new administration and we look forward to seeing the end result. Work continues on the refurbishment of the shelter and I have received great feedback from the community, as although it is still a work in progress, the bus shelter looks so much better with the new metal cladding and restored iron work on the canopy.

The Council also agreed the installation of a Malvern Tourism sign in Rosebank Gardens, based on similar signs in other towns and with the hope that it will promote the town to visitors. After a healthy debate we have agreed the location of the new sign, which resulted in the relocation of the Jenny Lind sculpture. This project will be completed in the next few weeks.


In October we started selling another Mayor's calendar, this time featuring Guide Dogs and their handlers from Malvern and Ledbury. They were photographed across sites belonging to the Town Council, and proved very popular, especially for Christmas presents. We were able to get some great sponsorship for printing costs from QinetiQ and this meant that all proceeds went straight to the Guide Dogs charity.

Thank you to members from Beacon Camera Club for giving up a day to help take the photographs to use in the calendar.

Malvern Town Council has continued its commitment to the environment by setting aside and approving an additional budget to allow the purchase of an electric vehicle in April 2023. The Council also agreed to spend £6,000 on electric tools including, six electric strimmers and one electric hedge trimmer. These have proved very popular with the operations team as they are lighter and quieter to use, and produce fewer vibrations, so are not only better for the environment but also for our team's well being.

At the end of 2022, we saw another fantastic Christmas Light switch on, and it was wonderful to see crowds out in force again. Father Christmas was so busy throughout the day, which was marvellous as he helped raise a considerable amount of funds for the Mayor's Charity.

I haven't quite finished my second year as Mayor and there are still more events to be held. We will see in April another Mayor's Peaks Challenge and tickets are selling well.



The office staff have again been successful in negotiating corporate sponsorship for the event so all the entry fees will be donated to the Mayor's Charity appeal and we are confident that we will reach the target of £10,000, which will allow us to run a Name a Puppy competition.

As a Council we have a responsibility to the residents of Malvern to work as efficiently and robustly as possible.

To this end, this year saw the review of the Malvern Town Council Policies and Procedures and once again it is great to report that the Audit of the workings of the Council reported a very clean bill of health. This is due in the main to the staff led by Linda and of course Charles and their teams.

I never get tired of reminding people how hard the town council staff work to make Malvern a great place to live work and play and as Councillors we owe a huge debt to the staff who work so hard all year round.

We have seen a number of projects completed throughout the year and these include, but are not limited to:

- Refurbishment of the Michael Crescent Play Area
- Repairs and resurfacing to roads at Great Malvern Cemetery
- Tarmacking works at Dukes Meadow / Sherrards Green
- Fencing works carried out along the western boundary of Rosebank Gardens
- Creation of new raised bed in the entrance way of Rosebank Gardens

All of these works and many other projects throughout the year are carried out in house by the Operations Team, and this helps to keep a tight control on the budget.

Very recently we have seen the formal acquisition of land off Mill Lane / Charlock Road and we held a public consultation in February regarding future uses of this land, asking local residents (who turned out to a public meeting in significant numbers) what they wanted to see happen to the land and they were very open and honest about our suggestions on how we can make best use of the land. It is clear that the protection and promotion of wildlife is very important to many of you, but there is much support for the installation of a Pump Track. For the older members of Council and readers of this report (and I include myself in this statement) a pump track is similar to a skate park but for bikes as well as skateboards. We hope to provide something for everyone and value your input into this.



Staff, as with most businesses and organisations, is our biggest asset and we need to ensure we support them.

Malvern Town Council strives to be setting the best example in the public sector. Our values as a Town Council of social responsibility also extend to those who work for us and so the payment of a Winter Payment Allowance clearly demonstrates the Council's social responsibility. As a result Malvern Town Council committed to making a one-off Winter Payment Allowance to each member of staff to attempt to offset the rising cost-of-living and energy prices.

We will be progressing plans to:

- Develop the land at Mill Lane taking into consideration comments made by the public.
- Build a new community hub in Victoria Park
- Relocate and improve the skate park in Victoria Park

I am so pleased that to have worked with the Guide Dogs UK Ledbury and Malvern branch as my chosen charity for the year. We have raised a fantastic amount for this charity and as a dog owner it has given me (and Linda who also owns a Labrador) many opportunities to stroke some great Guide Dogs and meet their owners.

Debbie Pitts from Guide Dogs and her team have been fantastic in supporting us in our fund raising and the events they have attended have also allowed them to publicise the great work the Guide Dogs charity does for many, many people.

I am grateful to all those who help in one way or another but I would like to say a particular thank you to the Buzzards Running Club for raising valuable funds for the Mayor's Charity and well done for coming first in the Quiz last October!

It has been a challenging but enjoyable second year as Mayor and I am humbled that I have been able to represent Malvern and Malvern Town Council at such important events throughout the year.

Yes, it has had its challenges and I have been subject to a certain amount of scrutiny on my chairing skills, but I have welcomed this as it means people care about the work that we do.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone for the support they have given me as Mayor in my second term, I always endeavour to encourage people to speak up, encourage debate and try to be fair to all even in challenging circumstances.

A big thank you to the office team, Clare, Debs, Lyndsey, Hazel and of course Louise who keeps me in the right place at the right time and Linda who keeps me sane.

A big thank you to Charles and the Operations team as well of course.

Overall, we have seen probably one of the largest amounts raised for some time for the Mayor's Charity which this year is Guide Dogs UK.

This is due in the main to the hard work of the Town Council staff in organising and managing events around the town for both the benefit of the local residents and so a final thank you to Linda and Charles and their teams for providing an excellent service to the local community and Councillors alike.



A small selection of articles from the Malvern Gazette



Malvern mayor goes paragliding - and this is why

19 February 2023

But he wasn't alone - Cllr **Houghton** was in the capable hands of Malvern Hang Gliding Club's Steve Ashley - and it was all for a good cause. Cllr **Houghton** was raising money for Guide Dogs, his Mayor's Charity for the year.



Mayor launches walking event to raise funds for Guide Dogs

31 January 2023

Cllr **Houghton** said "This is a major fundraising event for the mayor's charity and will help us reach our target of £10,000 to sponsor and name a Guide Dog Puppy.



Jenny Lind sculpture to move to make way for new sign

10 February 2023

A vote on whether to move the Jenny Lind statue to make way for it was split, with mayor Nick **Houghton** using his casting vote to decide in favour of the proposal.



Visually impaired people face long waits for new guide dogs

30 January 2023

Malvern mayor Nick **Houghton** named Guide Dogs as his chosen charity for the year and Malvern Town Council has helped raise £1,000 for the charity by producing a Guide Dogs calendar.



Mayor of Malvern chooses his new charity for this year

18 June 2022

Cllr **Houghton** said: "I have chosen Guide Dogs as my Mayoral charity because they help make sure people living with sight loss don't lose their freedom as well.



Mayor of Malvern calls proclamation ceremony 'honour and privilege'

12 September 2022

Cllr Nick **Houghton** delivered the proclamation of King Charles III yesterday (Sunday, September 11) in Rosebank Gardens. He said: "I obviously consider the opportunity to deliver the proclamation an incredible honour and a privilege.



Sculpture tribute to famous Malvern singer unveiled

12 October 2022

A group from Stockholm attended the ceremony, and on behalf of Malvern Town Council, mayor of Malvern Cllr Nick **Houghton**, welcomed the guests and visitors. ...



Great Malvern Christmas tree in place ahead of lights switch-on

23 November 2022

READ MORE: Buzzards sculpture will be lit up to celebrate Malvern charity He'll be joined by Malvern mayor Nick **Houghton** and Father Christmas, who will be stopping by on his way back to the North Pole.



Malvern Pride confirmed for 2023 return after "stunning" success this year

4 September 2022

READ MORE: Malvern Pride 2022 a hit in town The planned events in 2020 and 2021 both had to be cancelled due to the pandemic, with mayor of Malvern Nick **Houghton** expressing his joy at seeing such a positive reception.



Christmas charity concert will raise funds for mayor's charity

10 December 2022

The mayor of Malvern Nick **Houghton** said: "It's great that we can bring back the Charity Christmas Carol this year.



Watch: Malvern Pride 2022 in Priory Park see's hundreds of attendees

30 July 2022

The festival kicked off at midday in Malvern, with the support of both the town and district councils and the mayor of Malvern, Cllr Nick **Houghton**.



Veterans pay respects to Falklands War dead at special ceremony

14 June 2022

Cllrs Allen and **Houghton** were also joined by district council vice-chair Barbara Jones-Williams and district councillor Andrea Morgan.



More of the best photos from Malvern's Jubilee celebrations

7 June 2022

Mayor of Malvern, councillor Nick **Houghton** opened the event telling the crowd: "Thank you for coming, we have typical British weather but you are all very stoic." ...



Councillor resigned because he "couldn't face another year with wretched mayor"

18 May 2022

In response, Cllr **Houghton** said he wished Cllr Tuthill all the best and that the decision to move to Victoria Park had been discussed by the council as a whole.



Community Action celebrates 50th anniversary with event at Malvern Priory

12 August 2022

The charity was joined by deputy Lord Lieutenant Charles Morgan, Harriett Baldwin MP and Mayor of Malvern Cllr Nick **Houghton** and Chairman of Malvern Hills District Council, Cllr John Michael.



Malvern celebrates taking home gold in Heart of England in Bloom awards

29 September 2022

Cllr Nick **Houghton**, mayor of Malvern said: "This is an excellent achievement for Malvern, and thanks must go to all of the Town Council staff involved as well as to the "In Bloom" volunteers and those from partnership organisations within the town.



Fun in store as Malvern Mayor's Bonanza returns to town this weekend

25 August 2022

Cllr Nick **Houghton**, mayor of Malvern said: "The Bonanza is a great way for local people to enjoy a local event on their doorstep.



Kids' basketball training camp taking place in Malvern this summer

29 July 2022

The cost of renting the basketball court in Victoria Park has been completely covered by town mayor Cllr Nick **Houghton**, with Mr Wurmli keen to give something back to the community.



Fun and games in Victoria Park as Mayor's Bonanza returns to Malvern

1 September 2022

The climbing wall was popular throughout, with even Cllr **Houghton** and deputy mayor Clive Hooper having a go themselves.



All you need to know about this weekend's Malvern Pride

28 July 2022

Kicking off at midday in Malvern, Pride has been supported by both the town and district councils, and mayor of Malvern Cllr Nick **Houghton**, a member of the Pride committee, said excitement was already building.