



## Press Release

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**Title: Community Heroes receive Civic Awards from the Town Council**

### Embargoed:

**When:** 24 January 2025

**Where:** Wokingham Town Hall

**What:** Civic Award Ceremony

Each year, the Town Council through our Civic Award process, recognises residents who have supported our local community. We seek nominations to identify those who have worked to make Wokingham a truly welcoming and inclusive town, provided exceptional service to their family or community, added to the cultural life of the town, or found ways of making us a more environmentally friendly and sustainable town.

Recipients are nominated by a member of the community and nominations are judged by a selection panel including members of Wokingham Town Council's Civic Committee and the High Steward of Wokingham, Lucy Zeal.

Awards were presented at the Town Hall by the Town Mayor Cllr Rob Comber at an evening ceremony on 24th January, 2025.

The Council is delighted to announce this year's worthy recipients:

### **Allen Cooper: Nominated by Railton Blyth and Claire Revie for his work at St. Crispin's School, Soulscape, SHARE Wokingham and Norrey's Church Youth Programme.**

Allen is described as a thoughtful caring and joyful individual with a passion for encouraging the younger generation. Allen works on many projects within the community and St Crispin's School, leading groups and working one to one with students. His friendliness and ability to build bonds with people has helped break down barriers enabling young people to share thoughts and feelings and find a way forward. At St Crispin's, many former students speak of their interaction with Allen and how his support has enabled them to become the people they are today.

**Bob DuGard: Nominated by Andy Goffin and Ian Grange for his work with, and commitment to, Wokingham Lions Club.**

As a Trustee and valued member of the Board, Bob has made a significant contribution to the club since joining 5 years ago. Bob introduced the new and very popular Classic Car Show to The Lions' event calendar and took on the management of health and safety across all Lions events. His passion for the club and the community has seen him foster greater community and grow business within the town.

**Colin Melhuish: Nominated by Mike Saynor and Phillipa Robinson for his role and vital work with the Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers.**

Colin has been a member of Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers for nearly 25 years. As co-coordinator Colin manages the website, organises work parties, buying, maintaining and storing all the group's tools and producing and storing administrative documents such as Health and Safety and Work Party record sheets for the conservation work. Colin is very good with people, regularly welcoming and working alongside volunteers completing their Duke of Edinburgh awards.

**Dorothy Powell: Nominated by Karen Shrosbery and Sharon Bailey for her enthusiasm and dedication to JAC in a Box charity shop.**

At 85 years old, Dorothy proves that age is no barrier to volunteering, running the donation room at JAC in a Box charity shop with care and kindness. Working with young volunteers aged between 16 and 25 years, Dorothy shares tips and advice to help build confidence and transferable skills. She is both an asset and an inspiration to her colleagues.

**Fiona Cross: Nominated by Michael Noak and Alan Fieldsend for her dedication to The Holt School and leadership of the Board of Governors.**

Fiona has been on The Holt School Board of Governors for 9 years and Chair of Governors for the past 4 years. She is admired for her ability to be clear headed, prioritise important issues and identify and lead on strategic issues. Her dedication to the school has helped The Holt School remain a leading school in the area and ensured the retention of its Excellent OFSTED rating.

Unfortunately Fiona was not able to be at the awards ceremony so a separate individual presentation will be arranged for her at a later date.

**Jayne Yelland: Nominated by Liz Jenkins and Cheryl Carter for her leadership of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wokingham Scout Group. Jayne also volunteers and raises funds for the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal, St Crispin's PTA and the Barkham Hookers.**

Jayne is a creative and enthusiastic leader of the 3rd Wokingham Scout Group. Jayne goes above and beyond to give up her time to volunteer in Scouting on a weekly basis, including all the required planning, training and not to forget the weekend and week-long camps in the UK and abroad. She is welcoming to all involved, regularly introducing new activities and supporting individuals and families. Jayne's interests see her volunteer in a number of roles across the town, often bringing skills from different roles together, enhancing fundraising initiatives in all the organisations she touches.

**Natalie Ives: Nominated by Claire Revie and Carolyn Wildman for her work with SHARE Wokingham and Roots Community Store.**

Natalie always goes above and beyond for others. As a busy mum of 6 children herself, she still finds time to volunteer at SHARE on a Thursday and Friday and Roots Community Store on Wednesdays. Natalie is a key member of the front of house team and shows immense care and compassion for both clients and staff members. Her ability to form bonds with people extends to all she comes across.

**Neil Patterson: Nominated by Andrian Dolan and JB Staunton for his longstanding work with the Ashridge Park Football Club Tournament.**

Neil organises the only grassroots football tournament in Wokingham, which due to its outstanding organisation is supported by clubs from far and wide. With approximately 200 teams and 3000 visitors per tournament, Neil leads an army of 130 volunteers to ensure each tournament is a success. Over 10 years, Neil has modernised and added elements to create a smooth-running, fun and friendly tournament which raises a huge amount of money for the club. This in turn has helped keep fees low and ensures the club is accessible for all who play.

**Sue English: Nominated by Carole Barnes and Pauline MacBrayne for her work as Trustee with WADE Day Centre and fund raiser as a Friend of WADE, her work with Cowshed and Barkham Hookers.**

Over the past 30+ years, Sue has befriended many residents in the town, both young and old, and enriched their lives in numerous ways. She has shared her talents and generously devoted many hours to improving the lives and conditions of those around her. Sue is described as a well-organised people person and a perfect example of the saying 'if you want something done, ask a busy person'. As both a Trustee and fundraiser at WADE Day Care, Sue brings her various skills and charity work together crocheting bunting, sewing, nurturing plants, and baking cakes, ensuring that each event is a huge success.

**Quotes:**

Cllr Keith Malvern (Chairman of Civic Committee) commented: "We have so many dedicated and selfless people working for the benefit of our community on a day-to-day basis, and it is a great honour to recognise them each year through the Civic Awards ceremony. Help is often given through creating an environment in which to thrive, bringing families together, putting on events for the community to enjoy or offering a helping hand to those who need it."

Cllr Rob Comber (Town Mayor) commented: "Civic Awards are one of Wokingham Town Council's highlights of the year. It is our chance to say, 'Thank You' to our unsung heroes for going above and beyond in their voluntary activities in the community."

## About WTC

**Vision:** To enhance Wokingham Town for all current and future residents and businesses.

Wokingham Town Council comprises twenty-five councillors who represent the eight wards of the town covering the following neighbourhoods: Emmbrook, Evendons, Norreys and Wescott.

The Town Councillors are elected every four years. Each year the Council elects one of their members to be the Town Mayor and Chairman of the Council.

The Council delegates much of its business to the following committees:

- **Amenities:** Responsible for the Council's facilities such as parks, allotments, buildings, markets, and playgrounds
- **Arts & Culture:** Encourages, supports and, in conjunction with other organisations, delivers artistic and cultural events to users of the town centre.
- **Civic:** Makes decisions on matters relating to the Mayor's Civic involvement with the Town Council. These include Civic Events such as Civic Awards, Remembrance Commemorations, Town Hall visits and the honorary staff members.
- **Finance & Personnel:** Controls the finances and general administration of the Council. This committee also administers the allocation of grants to local charities and community projects.
- **Planning & Transportation:** This committee acts as a consultative body on Planning Applications, Development Proposals and Transport issues.

The Full Council meets at least five times a year. Council meetings are open to the public.

The agendas and minutes can be found on the Town Council's web site at

[www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk).

For general information please telephone the Town Council on 0118 978 3185.

**For more information, please visit [www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk](http://www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk)**