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# COUNCIL (MAYOR MAKING)

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**Saturday, 31st May, 2025**

**Present:** Councillor Josh Allen (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Noordad Aziz, Mike Booth, Scott Brerton, Stephen Button, Danny Cassidy, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Bernard Dawson MBE, Stewart Eaves, Peter Edwards, Melissa Fisher, Andy Gilbert, Marlene Haworth, Zak Khan, Dave Parkins, Kath Pratt, Clare Pritchard, Ethan Rawcliffe, Kate Walsh, Kimberley Whitehead and Clare Yates

**Apologies:** Councillors Heather Anderson, Andrew Clegg, Loraine Cox, Paul Cox, Shabir Fazal OBE, David Heap, Clare McKenna, Joyce Plummer, Steven Smithson, Tina Walker and Mohammed Younis

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## **22 Welcome**

Mr David Welsby, Chief Executive, welcomed Honorary Freeman, Honorary Aldermen, Past Mayors and Mayoresses, Councillors and honoured guests, as well as their friends and family to the 2025/26 Mayor Making Ceremony, to install the new Mayor of the Borough, to thank the retiring Mayor and Mayoress and to formally introduce the newly appointed Aldermen and Freeman. The presentation to new Aldermen and Freeman in the Concil Chamber would be relatively brief to allow for a formal presentation in the ballroom this afternoon in front of a larger group of family and friends.

A special welcome was afforded to Freeman, Mrs Joan Pilkington, who had recently celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday with a trip to the coast and some fish and chips.

## **23 Declaration of Mayor - 2025/26**

Mr Welsby announced that at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, Councillor Josh Allen had been elected Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Josh was the youngest person to be elected as Mayor of Hyndburn, at 31 years of age.

The Mayor read aloud the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Mayor, as signed at the Annual Council meeting, and was presented with the Mayoral Fob by Councillor Mike Booth, Mayor in 2024/25. Councillor Booth spoke a few words of congratulation. Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, gave a speech of welcome to the Mayor and his Mayoresses and referred to his family's tradition of serving in public office with regard to his late mother and grandfather. He also mentioned the challenges ahead in connection with the Mayor's role in raising money for various charities. Councillors Zak Khan and Marlene Haworth also spoke to congratulate the Mayor on his appointment.

The Mayor responded by thanking all for attending. He considered serving in this role a great privilege. He acknowledged that taking up office had been a painful reminder of family losses endured in recent years. He undertook to do his best in the role and was proud of the Borough and its history. He thanked his predecessor Councillor Booth for instilling a sense of order and decency in the Council Chamber. He expressed his gratitude to his wife Robyn and family friend Sheena Tyldesley (a close friend of his late mother), for

accepting the roles of Mayoresses, following which he presented each of them with a bouquet of flowers.

## **24 Declaration of Deputy Mayor - 2025/26**

The Mayor announced that at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, Councillor Noordad Aziz had been elected Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2025/26. Councillor Aziz read aloud the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Deputy Mayor, as signed at the Annual Council meeting.

Councillor Aziz thanked the Mayor and wished him well.

### ***Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor and Mayoress***

The Mayor then proposed a formal vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Councillor Mike Booth and his Mayoress, Ms Christine Sollis. He remarked on their impressive record of attending local events.

The Leader of the Council commented on his respect for and appreciation of Councillor Booth's efforts. His service as Mayor had been exemplary and his dedication and deep sense of duty had been notable. He had also restored a sense of purpose and calmness to proceedings in the Council Chamber. His Mayoress Christine Sollis, had provided steadfast support, particularly around charitable activities. Their work had raised funds for charities and fostered unity between communities. He thanked them for all they had done. Councillor Khan echoed these sentiments and highlighted the retiring Mayor's commitment to dignity and promoting the office of the Mayor. He also thanked the retiring Mayoress for her support.

Councillor Booth gave a short speech of thanks. He was pleased to note that an ex-pupil from his former school, Ryhddings High School, was assuming the role of Mayor. He also talked about the importance of the Borough's heritage. Councillor Booth had moved into Oswaldtwistle in 1994 and had been interested in the Borough's part in the birth of the industrial revolution. James Hargreaves' Spinning Jenny had been developed in Stanhill. Councillor Booth had done his best to promote the Borough's heritage. After taking a break from teaching following a sporting injury, his father had encouraged him to take an interest in local history, particularly in the story of the Accrington Pals. Some of his material had inspired Bill Turner to carry out his own research into the Pals and to write his renowned book. One highlight of his mayoral year was the unveiling of the new statue at the Pals Memorial Gardens on Church Street, Accrington. He noted that work was on-going through the Dome project to capture the story of the textile industry, including immigration into the area principally from West Pakistan.

The Mayor then presented a Past Mayor's badge and framed resolution to the retiring Mayor and some flowers to the retiring Mayoress.

## **25 Conferment of the Titles of Honorary Freeman and Aldermen**

Members were reminded that at the Annual Council Meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025, in accordance with Section 249(5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough had been conferred on Mrs Hilary Austin, Mr Stephen Hutchinson BEM, Mr Rawden Kerr, Mr Zack Kerr and Pastor Anne Lincoln. Furthermore, in pursuance of Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the title of Honorary Alderman had been conferred on Mr Peter Britcliffe, Mr Graham Jones, Mr Abdul Khan and Mr Malcolm Pritchard, in recognition of them each having rendered eminent service to the Council and who were now past members of the Council.

The Mayor welcomed forward each of the recipients in turn and invited each to sign the roll of honour and to pose for a commemorative photograph.

The Chief Executive reminded all present that speeches about their achievements and their acceptance speech would take place in the Ballroom, after the celebratory luncheon, so that a wider group of family and friends could witness the occasion. The framed certificates and official medals would also be presented by the Mayor at that time.

The meeting then concluded.

*All guests were invite to join the Mayor in a short while in the Ballroom for the Civic Celebration meal. The new Freeman and Aldermen and their guests were asked to remain the Council Chamber for a group photograph with the Mayor.*

Signed:.....

Date: .....

Chair of the meeting  
at which the minutes were confirmed