
COUNCIL (MAYOR MAKING)

Saturday, 20th June, 2026

Present: Councillor Noordad Aziz (Mayor), Councillors Judith Addison, Vanessa Alexander, Heather Anderson, Mike Booth, Stephen Button, Jodi Clements, Munsif Dad BEM JP, Stewart Eaves, Melissa Fisher, Jordan Fox, Andy Gilbert, Gaynor Hargreaves, Ashley Joynes, Zak Khan, Anthony Mitchell, Lance Parkinson, Miles Parkinson OBE, Kath Pratt, Clare Pritchard, Kate Walsh and Clare Yates

Also in Attendance: Saddia Hussain (Mayoress), Hamida Begum (Mayoress), Kimberley Whitehead (Consort), Josh Allen (Mayor 2025/26), Robyn Bradshaw-Allen (Mayoress 2025/26), Sheena Tyldesley (Mayoress 2025/26), Sarah Smith MP, Anne Ellwood, Saeeda Farooq, Barbara Fielding, Jim Haworth, Rodney Mayor, Tracy Simmonds, Mohammed Yaseen, Bernard Dawson MBE, June Harrison, Susan Haworth, Joyce Plummer and Dorothy Westell and other serving Aldermen and Freemen of the Borough and their guests

Apologies: Councillors Sohail Asghar, Paul Brown, Lorraine Cox, Paul Cox, Shabir Fazal OBE, David Heap, Clare McKenna, Dave Parkins, Ethan Rawcliffe, Steven Smithson, Joel Tetlow, Tina Walker and Mohammed Younis

23 Welcome

Mr David Welsby, Chief Executive, welcomed Honorary Freemen, Honorary Aldermen, Past Mayors and Mayoresses, Councillors, Sarah Smith MP and honoured guests, as well as their friends and family to the 2026/27 Mayor Making Ceremony, to install the new Mayor of the Borough, to thank the retiring Mayor and his Mayoresses and to formally introduce the newly appointed Aldermen and Freemen. The formal recognition of the new Aldermen and Freemen in the Council Chamber would be relatively brief to allow for a formal presentation of the award in the Ballroom later this afternoon in front of a larger group of family and friends.

24 Declaration of Mayor - 2026/27

Mr Welsby announced that, at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 28th May 2026, Councillor Noordad Aziz had been elected Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2026/27.

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 Mr Josh Allen, the retiring Mayor from 2025/26. Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP, Leader of the Council, announced his congratulations to the new Mayor and gave a speech welcoming the Mayor's family, particularly his mother and father who were both present. Councillor Dad remarked that he had grown up alongside the Mayor's father. He noted that Councillor Aziz had a large presence and had served the community in Great Harwood passionately for

some 14 years. He would make an excellent Mayor and would proudly follow in the footsteps of the outgoing Mayor, Josh Allen.

Councillor Zak Khan also spoke on behalf of the Conservative group to congratulate the Mayor on his appointment and noted the strength of his conviction when speaking in the Council Chamber. The role of Chair of the Council needed both patience and, occasionally, disciplinarian's approach, and Councillor Aziz was sure to rise to the challenge. He would also make a solid connection to the public during his future engagements. The role of Mayor was a symbol of unity, a goal that all councillors should share. The support of Councillor Aziz's family would also be important during his mayoral year and their role was acknowledged and appreciated.

Councillor Anthony Mitchell expressed his sincere congratulations on the Mayor's appointment and acknowledged the importance of the role. The civic office belonged to the whole Borough and he looked forward to working with the new Mayor. He noted that councillors might have different political ideologies, but that it should be possible to find some common ground. The Council was fortunate to have a strong Chair at its helm.

The new Mayor, Councillor Aziz, thanked the speakers for their kind words and thanked all councillors, freemen, aldermen, and accompanying friends and family for their attendance. He started with an Islamic prayer from the Prophet Moses which translated as:

My Lord, expand for me my breast with assurance And ease for me my task And untie the knot from my tongue That they may understand my speech.
(Surah Ta-Ha Ayat 25-28 of the Quran)

The Mayor congratulated the newly appointed aldermen and freemen on their awards.

He then gave a speech which included details of his journey from a pupil at Great Harwood Primary School and Norden High School, to the first citizen of Hyndburn, which was beyond his expectations. His first job and continual hard work had taught him responsibility and the value of community.

He was disappointed to note that some people on social media had expressed disapproval at his appointment. However, he was firmly of the view that there were more things that united society rather than divided it - particularly kindness and hope. He was pleased that Hyndburn was full of decent hard-working people who cared, did voluntary work and who raised money for good causes.

The Mayor was proud of his immigrant heritage, but also of his long-established home of Great Harwood and the wider Borough of Hyndburn. His father had served the community tirelessly in both the textile industry and as a hackney cab driver. The Mayor's wife and family were also invested in the local community through education and other work. He praised his mother as simple, unassuming and kind. They had all helped to shape him, leading to his involvement in unions, maximising educational opportunities and becoming a chartered accountant with a housing developer. He also paid tribute to a number of deceased friends and to Rawden Kerr (Great Harwood Town Crier) who had provided advice, encouragement and inspiration along the way.

The Mayor expressed his deep affection for Great Harwood and his friends and neighbours there. He also thanked his daughters for their on-going support. Some of the defining moments in his life had included access to the young Muslims leadership programme and a poignant visit to Srebrenica on the 31st anniversary of the genocide. This was stark

reminder of what hatred could lead to and why people should stand together and respect each other.

For his mayoral year, he hoped to champion community values and also to support the following charities:

- Derian House Children's Hospice;
- Milly's Smiles;
- Laurie Solomon Kidney Dialysis Centre; and
- East Lancashire Hospice.

He also reminded councillors of his young family and aging parents and explained that he had sought the support of four Consorts to assist him and his Mayoresses through the year. These were Councillors Judith Addison, Jodi Clements and Clare Yates, as well as former councillor, Kimberley Whitehead.

Finally, the Mayor indicated that he intended to introduce a Purple Heart Award for community champions and local heroes in the Borough.

The Mayor then expressed his gratitude to his wife Saddia and his mother Hamida for accepting the roles of Mayoresses, following which he presented each of them with a bouquet of flowers.

25 Declaration of Deputy Mayor - 2026/27

The Chief Executive announced that at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 20th June 2026, Councillor Stewart Eaves had been elected Deputy Mayor of the Borough for the Municipal Year 2026/27. Councillor Eaves read aloud the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Deputy Mayor, as signed at the Annual Council meeting.

26 Vote of Thanks to the Retiring Mayor and Mayoresses

The Mayor then proposed a formal vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Mr Josh Allen and his Mayoresses, Robyn Bradshaw-Allen and Sheena Tyldesley. He remarked that it had been a busy year for the civic team and he hoped that they had all enjoyed the honour and experience of representing the Borough.

The Leader of the Council commented on their hard work and noted that they would be a difficult act to follow. He also reflected that Josh had been a credit to his late mother and grandfather, who had also served as councillors. He thanked the retiring Mayor for his service and wished him luck for the future.

Councillor Khan also spoke about the retiring Mayor and highlighted his dedication, integrity and passion for people. He noted that the Mayor had represented the Council at many engagements and had almost never had to turn down an invitation, supporting numerous charities and institutions, particularly those regarding youth issues. He had demonstrated the best of public service, continuing a family tradition. His friends, Jim and the late Marlene Haworth, would also be proud of him. He envisaged that there might be more public service from Mr Allen to come in the future. He thanked him for his service and his friendship.

Councillor Mitchell added his thanks. Although had not had the opportunity to engage with the retiring Mayor personally, he commented that his work for charities had been inspiring.

Mr Allen thanked all for their kind words and the opportunity to have been Mayor. He quipped that Councillor Aziz wore the chains of office well! He reflected that the role was a big commitment on personal time, but that the investment was worthwhile and should be enjoyed. There was a great opportunity to do good and to raise lots of money for charity. In a final word of advice, he reassured the Mayor that he should pay no attention to those who posted disparaging comments on-line.

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

27 Conferment of the Titles of Honorary Freeman and Aldermen

Members were reminded that at two recent Special Meetings of the Council, the title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough had been conferred on Judith Addison, Pam Barton (deceased), Anne Ellwood, Saeeda Farooq, Barbara Fielding, Marlene Haworth (deceased), Gwen Mayor (deceased), Dave Parkins, Tracy Simmonds and Mohammed Yaseen. Furthermore, the title of Honorary Alderman had been conferred on Josh Allen, Bernard Dawson MBE, June Harrison, Susan Haworth, Joyce Plummer and Dorothy Westell.

The Mayor announced that those present, or their representatives, would be signing the roll of honour in the Chamber this morning. All were incredibly deserving of the awards.

A few words about each recipient would be read out later in the day after the civic meal, in the Ballroom, and recipients could give a brief response in front of their closest family and friends.

The Mayor then 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 roll of honour for Pam Barton, Marlene Haworth, Gwen Mayor and Councillor Dave Parkins was signed by Councillor Clare Pritchard, Jim Haworth, Rodney Mayor and Kimberley Whitehead respectively. Diana Riley, daughter of Pam Barton, would be available to attend the civic luncheon in the afternoon.

The framed certificates and official medals would be presented by the Mayor to all new Aldermen and Freeman later, in the Ballroom.

The meeting then concluded.

All guests were invited to join the Mayor at 12.30pm in the Ballroom for the Civic Celebration meal. The new Freeman and Aldermen and their guests were asked to remain at the foot of the main staircase for photographs with the Mayor. The Mayor's family and friends would then follow for photographs by the staircase.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed