

## **Freedom of Saltash given to longstanding Saltash volunteer**

At the town's Civic Service on 21st April 2024, it was announced that Bob Austin has been awarded the Freedom of Saltash, joining a small group of five current Freemen of the town. There is stringent criteria for this rare and exceptional award, but Bob fulfils this, with all that he does across many organisations throughout the town and for the community of Saltash.

Here are just some of the things he is involved in.

Bob was one of the original members of Saltash Environmental Action, and since its inception has been Chair of the Friends of Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve, organising activities such as educational walks, talks and social gatherings, as well as being very hands on in helping to maintain and manage the site and protecting the habitats alongside Cornwall Wildlife Trust.

In 2015, Bob played a pivotal role as a founder member of The Core Youth and Community Centre. He has continued to serve as a Trustee of The Core over the intervening years, and is currently Vice Chair of the Management Committee. He has devoted significant energy over a period of many years as a Trustee at Saltash Wesley Methodist Church, and remains a key figure in delivering events and transporting elderly residents. The church is very much a social hub for many and Bob is fundamental in many of the activities that take place there.

Bob was a volunteer CEPL12 director from 2006 to 2019, and as such was one of the founding directors, previously being part of Saltash Partnerships from which it developed. Bob's years of service in local government as an elected member of Saltash Town Council, Cornwall Council, and previously Caradon District Council, speak volumes about his dedication to public service, serving as a Councillor in various guises for nearly twenty years, as well as being Mayor of Saltash in 2007.

Mayor of Saltash Councillor Richard Bickford presented Bob with his award and commented that 'Bob is a very worthy recipient of this exceptional award and having worked alongside Bob for many years I know how dedicated he is. He is always open to new ideas and is naturally a welcoming person making him such an asset to many organisations across Saltash'.

Bob was selected from several nominations put forward by residents of Saltash. The award is recorded on a Freeman Board in the Council Chamber at Saltash Guildhall and recipients are able to participate in the Civic Award process and are invited to Civic occasions.