

My warmest congratulations to Councillor Julia Peggs who is now Mayor Elect. She thoroughly deserves the honour and will do a fantastic job. Councillor Rachel Bullock is now Deputy Mayor Elect, she will bring so much enthusiasm to the role. I am confident they will be a great team and will continue driving forward our plans.

So there it is, two years of meeting amazing people and trying to chair Town Council meetings. That's the simple version of being the Mayor, reality is a bit more complicated. There have been too many highlights to mention, but thanks to all the individuals and organisations that make our town, one of the best.

A newly appointed Chairman/Mayor of Saltash has to hit the ground running, their position is made official at the beginning of May and it means that a few days later they are welcomed to the Saltash May Fair weekend with all that it brings. There might be some judging duties, starting or finishing a race or two and some medals and trophies to hand out. In our first term, Sarah and I also had the pleasure of visiting the Rugby Club over that weekend too.

I was privileged to be Mayor for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the celebrations that went on across Saltash. This was later followed by the sober events around the Queen's passing and the jubilation of the King's Coronation, events that will last long in the memory.

What has the Town Council achieved?

Well, let's start with a Strategic Vision, we now have one, this is largely down to our Town Clerk working with a handful of councillors who are part of our Town Vision Sub Committee. The team have now gone a step further producing our 3 year Business Plan that will hopefully allow us to better deliver the services in our town. This builds on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, and both will be key in ensuring that Saltash grows in the right way for years to come. These plans are available on our website if you wish to look at them.

One of Saltash's biggest challenges revolves around that for many years, investment in some areas has been sorely lacking. Healthcare is a prime example, St Barnabus Hospital still remains, but is underutilised which leads to underinvestment, worse still is that investment hasn't been directed elsewhere in the town. I thoroughly support the work of our Healthcare Action Group and proud to be part of the team fighting very hard to change minds in the complex world of healthcare provision. I must mention Peter Thistlethwaite and George Muirhead, respective chairs of the two Patient Participation Groups in Saltash. I am very hopeful that the team who have now published their 'Patients First' vision will see some results in time.

Lack of investment goes further, our Waterside is underinvested as is the Town Centre. The Town Centre is good at reinventing itself, and the Waterside remains a lovely place to visit. Both are wonderful, but could be so much more with a bit more care and attention from Cornwall Council.

Whilst bemoaning Cornwall Council, I would like to thank our Cornwall Councillors who are great advocates for Saltash. Many thanks to Hilary, Sheila and Martin for their lobbying and nudging of Cornwall Council officers in the background and their attendance at Town Council meetings and being key partners in our plans for the future.

I enjoy working with partners to deliver benefit to Saltash, that is why we have been trying to meet more regularly with our Cornwall Councillors, our MP, and recently reaching out across the Tamar to Councillors from Plymouth, I hope this continues.

I am writing this just before our Transport Trial Day, and just after Beryl Bikes launched in Saltash. I hope the weather held and you all found it useful. The team worked so hard, and we should all be grateful we have a dedicated hard working Town Clerk, who doesn't leave a stone unturned to deliver for our town.

After I hand over the Mayor's Chain and the responsibility of chairing the Town Council, I plan to redouble efforts on rail campaigning, especially around platform modifications to address Accessibility issues. I am busy writing a Rail Strategy document for our South East Cornwall CAP which I hope will help drive investment to the area.

I will be back next month for a few final comments and a hand over to Julia.

Councillor Richard Bickford  
Mayor of Saltash 2022-24

## Meet Your Councillor

Councillor Brenda Samuels

Trematon Ward



We are almost at the end of another busy year for Saltash Town Council. By the time this report goes to print we will probably know who our Mayor and Deputy Mayor are going to be for the next 12 months, starting in May. I wish them every success and know what an honour it is to represent Saltash, having enjoyed the position as Mayoress between 2020 and 2022 when my husband Pete was Mayor and Chairman of the Town Council. I will treasure those memories.

It has been my privilege in recent years to Chair the Planning and Licensing Committee at the Town Council and goodness me, we have seen a mass of applications coming into us for consultation. We have certainly had some tricky applications to consider but at the end of the day all we can do is try our best for our residents and understand their objections and sometimes their frustrations. I am a great advocate of allowing residents to be heard at planning meetings. I have on occasions asked for my fellow Councillors to allow temporary suspension of our normal speaking rules, in order to fully allow participation by residents and interested parties in the discussions and considerations.

It was a bit of a daunting task when STC decided to refuse an application recently, although it was subsequently supported by the Cornwall Planning Officer, but I was able to attend the East Cornwall Planning meeting to put our point across and represent the concerns of residents from that particular area. The planning chamber in Cornwall was the fullest it has ever been, with the majority of Cornwall Councillors attending, supporting our refusal, but that just proves that there is plenty of people power within our community and beyond.

Being part of various project teams within the Council has proved enjoyable and productive, alongside some of my fellow Councillors, all of us being volunteers, who are eager to enhance the various offerings we have in our Town. The connectivity project enabling us to trial different forms of transport to enable our residents to have more access to both the Waterside and beyond the Tamar into Plymouth. Of course, it will be great if that initiative proves successful as that transport will work both ways, bringing extra visitors to us whilst supporting our local business community.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a sum of money which is received from various planning applications. It is available to fund projects to enhance the community and we currently have a successful application running to provide more play facilities within the Pillmere area on the outskirts of the Town.

I thoroughly enjoy meeting with residents, not only those within the Trematon Ward which I represent, but all that I come into contact with, what a fantastic range of diversity we have in our Town. I can be contacted via the Town Council website or by email to [b.samuels@saltash.gov.uk](mailto:b.samuels@saltash.gov.uk)