



## PRESS RELEASE

1 May 2024

### Introducing our new Officers of Dignity Town Crier Emma Kimber and Beadle Linda Illsley

It is nine years since the Town Council had both a Beadle and a Town Crier. Our last Beadle, John Yates, stepped down in 2016 after about 5 years in the role. In the same year Town Crier Alfie Johnson<sup>1</sup> passed the bell to Mike Tupman<sup>2</sup>, who took on both roles combined. Sadly, Mike passed away earlier this year<sup>3</sup> and the Town Council began a campaign to recruit new people to join long-serving Mace Bearers, Bob Dobie and Barry Mercer.

#### Town Crier

Emma Kimber is our Marlborough's Town Crier. She said "I am very proud to be a member of the Emergency Service family including my dad, my father-in-law and both me & my husband, so I am used to uniforms and public service. As a result of my job I was lucky enough to meet and be good friends with the two previous Town Criers, Alf Johnson and Mike 'Tuppers' Tupman. I always joked with them that they needed to keep the Town Crier bell polished ready for when it was my turn. When we sadly lost Tuppers at the beginning of the year, his family encouraged and supported me with my application. I feel so very proud to be able to wear the uniform that he wore and feel that I have Alf and Tuppers watching over me as I take on my new role. My biggest supporter is my 6-year old daughter who attended my first event waving a Union Jack flag like I was The Queen. It's important to me to include future generations in our history and tradition."



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/community/photo-galleries-events/142-community/2022-alfie-johnson-in-his-own-words>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/news/news-articles/1365-town-crier-press-release>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/news/news-articles/2932-mike-tupman-mbe>

## Beadle

Linda Illsley (*pictured in green, holding a staff*) is our Beadle, and she comes to us with form! If you grew up in Marlborough, you may well remember that during her 22 years working in preschool, if a child asked for more snacks she would impersonate Harry Secombe as the Beadle in the film *Oliver* growling “More!!!” and then tell them about *Oliver Twist*. Never in her wildest dreams did she think that one day she would be the Beadle for the town that she knows so well.

Historically, the Beadle would punish petty offenders, but we hope that she won't have to do that - or growl at hungry children. She told us she is delighted to take up this honorary role, carrying out ceremonial duties and helping to retain a slice of Marlborough's heritage. Plus, as she told us: “I do love a smart outfit!”



Both were appointed in March and made their debut at a lifetime achievement award on 30 April to honour Robert Hiscox.

We hope you'll join us in thanking them for volunteering their time, and look forward to welcoming them at official engagements in the future.

*Richard Spencer-Williams*

Richard Spencer Williams, PSLCC  
Town Clerk

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## Notes to editors

For enquiries, please contact us using the methods below



*Beadle Linda Illsley and Town Crier Emma Kimber*

The position of Beadle and Mace Bearer have a long history. The Beadle is a town official whose job is to summon Marlborough parishioners to various meetings, lead processions into church, etc. Sometimes called 'constables', Beadles were originally officers who carried poles or staves so that they could, with these weapons, keep order on all occasions when the Mayor was present and clear a passage for the Mayor and those with him/her.

As the title implies the Mace Bearers carry the Maces ahead of the Mayor and are responsible for their proper care during ceremonies and that of all other insignia. The Mace is the emblem of the power and dignity of the Mayor and their authority, and the ancient title for this role is Serjeant-at-Mace: the officer carries the Mace before the Mayor. The origin of the Mace is as a weapon of defence: therefore no person should be allowed to walk between the Mace Bearer and the Mayor.

Marlborough has had a Town Crier since at least 1204, whose job it is to read proclamations and to make announcements about the town by ringing a bell with the cry “Oyez, Oyez, Oyez.” There is no legal obligation to read such proclamations in modern times, but it is a practice that is observed in most towns.