

Familiar face as Mark is named town mayor again

New man at the helm names PALS and West Berks Foodbank as charities of the year

THATCHAM waved goodbye to its current mayor and welcomed a familiar face as the new town mayor was elected last week.

Councillor Mark Lillycrop was elected mayor of Thatcham at a ceremony held at the Frank Hutchings Community Hall on Sunday.

He is replacing councillor Petra Pemberton, who has served in the role for the last year and has now been elected as deputy mayor.

Mr Lillycrop, who was also mayor in 2023/24, was delighted about the role, and said: "I'm delighted to be able to serve once again as mayor of Thatcham, a town that Jenny and I have called home for 35 years and that we care about deeply."

"It's very exciting to be able to work closely with local groups, volunteers and residents who give so much of their time and passion to help make our town stronger."

"I look forward to listening, learning and taking part in our many local activities."

Mr Lillycrop's wife Jenny will be mayoress, and the Rev Mark Bennet will be his chaplain.

Councillor Justin Pemberton was chosen to be the deputy mayor's consort.



New Thatcham mayor Mark Lillycrop and deputy Petra Pemberton
Ref: 19-1426P

Mr Lillycrop has been an elected councillor since 2019 and Mr Pemberton since 2023, both with previous mayoral experience during this time, and say they are delighted to serve the local community once again in these roles.

The mayor's charities have been selected as PALS West Berkshire and West Berks Foodbank.

Throughout the mayoral year,

fundraising events will be held to raise funds and awareness for both charities.

To invite the mayor to an event, visit Thatcham Town Council's website and complete the associated form.

Invitations will be dealt with on a first come basis and the mayor will strive to accommodate where possible.



Mayor Mark Lillycrop and mayoress Jenny Lillycrop
Ref: 19-1426H

"I look forward to listening, learning and taking part in our many local activities"

THATCHAM

Keeping in touch

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News updates from Thatcham are now available online throughout the week. Go to newburytoday.co.uk and select the district pages

newburytoday.co.uk

Focus group for young people

DO you want to hear your voice heard in Thatcham?

Thatcham Town Council is holding a focus group to gather the opinions of young people in the town.

The small, relaxed focus group for 11- to 18-year-olds is an informal way during half-term (May 27) to talk about what the town needs for young people – especially places to hang out, things to do and what it can do to make spaces feel safe and welcoming.

The 45- to 60-minute session will take place at Thatcham Town Council offices on Brownsfield Road on Wednesday, May 27, at 2pm.

There are 15 spaces available and places are first-come, first-served.

Canal walk for school improvements

A GROUP of primary education staff are taking on a challenge to raise money for vital school infrastructure.

On Sunday, a group of staff from Francis Baily Primary School in Thatcham will be taking part in a 12-mile sponsored walk along the Kennet and Avon Canal, walking from Hungerford to Thatcham.

The event is being organised to raise funds to improve its school playgrounds and outdoor spaces.

Francis Baily has emphasised how important playgrounds are to its pupils – providing a space for children to relax, play, build friendships and develop confidence and social skills.

A spokesperson for the school said: "Our playgrounds are in need of repair and updating."

"As it with all things, costs are high and current quotes to re-tarmac some areas and to update the markings across the playgrounds is currently around the £15,000 mark and we also want to add more equipment."

"Our school is always encouraging families and children to get involved and take on new challenges, so this sponsored walk is our way of showing that staff are just as willing to roll up their sleeves."

The school has its sights set on £5,000, but says it is currently sitting at around £1,000.

Staff say they are looking forward to the challenge, no matter what the weather turns out as, and thanked those who had already shown support:



Francis Baily Primary School



The group are walking from Hungerford to Thatcham along the Kennet and Avon Canal

"We are very grateful for the support we have already received from families and the local community, and hope this event will raise both funds and awareness for the value of well-resourced outdoor play areas for children."

The school recently celebrated the opening of a new

building for Year 5 and 6 pupils in March, which includes six new classrooms, two breakout learning areas and was built with sustainability in mind.

The project began in 2022 and was funded by the Department for Education through a successful bid to the Condition Improvement Fund.

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Sunday July 12th: We travel to Devon with a lunchtime stop in the historic city of Exeter, known for its beautiful cathedral and vibrant atmosphere.

Monday: We visit Torbay with stops in Torquay and Brixham. Torquay boats stunning beaches with palm-lined promenades giving it a Mediterranean feel. Brixham has a postcard-perfect harbour and is still one of the UK's busiest.

Tuesday: Today we visit Buckfast Abbey, a haven of beauty and tranquility nestled on the banks of the River Dart. Home to a working community of Benedictine monks, the Abbey offers a peaceful atmosphere, stunning architecture, and beautifully maintained gardens. After time to explore and enjoy lunch (not included), we take a short journey to board the South Devon Railway. Sit back and relax on a nostalgic steam train ride — a 14-mile round trip through lush countryside, following the scenic River Dart to Totnes and back.

Wednesday: We stay local today, beginning with a visit to Teignmouth, a charming coastal town known for its Georgian architecture, long sandy beaches, and relaxed seaside vibe. Later, we head to Dawlish, famous for its black swans, picturesque lawns, and scenic coastal walks.

Thursday: We begin our journey home with a short stop in Exmouth, a vibrant seaside town offering excellent shopping, a lively promenade, and panoramic views across the sea and estuary. A perfect final taste of the Devon coast before heading home.

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