

Mayor of Folkestone 2018-19

A Brief Biography - Councillor Ann Berry



Ann Berry, one of four children, was born in Morehall Avenue, Folkestone and has lived in Folkestone ever since. She went to Harcourt School in Surrenden Road and she left at 15 years of age.

Ann started work in retail and eventually worked for Folkestone's Woolworths from the age of 17, which is where she met her husband Maurice. Following their marriage, Ann and Maurice went on to have two children and they now have six grandchildren.

During her time at Woolworths, Ann progressed from Sales Assistant to Supervisor to Staff Manager, eventually becoming a Manager of the Rye store, at which time she was made Chairman of Chamber of Trade and was instrumental in re-introducing late night shopping at Christmas. After four years at Rye, Ann moved to the Hythe store as Manager until retirement.

Ann has worked in the community in various ways over the years. For example, as part of Home Start, she had the pleasure of looking after triplets for a few hours each week until they were 5 years old.

Ann played a key part in the formation, development and leadership of the Go Folkestone action group which then led to the successful 2003 referendum campaign seeking to establish a proper council just for the town of Folkestone, something which had been lost in the local government reorganisation of the early 1970s. Six members of Go Folkestone were subsequently elected to serve as Councillors onto Folkestone Town Council in 2004 and Ann was elected to be the first Chairman/Town Mayor of Folkestone.

Since joining the Town Council Ann has served on the Planning, Community Services, Finance, Grants and Allotments Committees. Ann is also an elected member of the Folkestone and Hythe District Council and has served on Overview and Scrutiny, Planning, Licencing and Cabinet.

Outside of politics, Ann is a Director and Vice-Chairman of the charity Step Short, which was set up in 2008 to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of WWI. Step Short have organised many commemorative marches and been involved with veterans, members of the Royal British Legion and cadet groups. During 2014 the Step Short Arch was built and on Monday 4th August Prince Henry of Wales (Prince Harry) visited Folkestone to dedicate the Arch to all those who served in WW1. Ann's work was recognised by the Prime Minister at the time, David Cameron, with a Points of Light Award – an award which recognises outstanding individual volunteers and people making a difference in their community.

With permission from the Harbour Arm Company, Ann set up the Mole Café team on the Harbour Arm, serving tea and cakes, as was done in the First World War, which has now been running for four years.

Ann has been a member of the Folkestone Municipal Charities, a charity that gives support for people in Folkestone providing one-off or monthly grants, for several years and held the position of Governor of St Peters School for four years.

Cllr Ann Berry said "As the Town Mayor of Folkestone I will, with the support of my fellow councillors and officers help to promote Folkestone and maintain that this is the place that people want to live in and visit. With the many changes that have happened in the past and are proposed, there is still much to do. I am upbeat about the future and I am sure that we, and the residents of Folkestone, can and will be justly proud of what we have and can achieve going forward."