

## **The Power and Value of Volunteering in Our Community**

### **Mayoral Civic Service 2025 Address by The Right Worshipful Mayor of New Romney: Cllr. John Rivers.**

Bishop Rose, Deputy Lieutenant, Right Worshipful and Worshipful Mayors, Chairmen, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Morning.

A warm welcome to you all.

Firstly, I would like to thank St Nicholas Church for allowing us to hold our Civic Service here today.

It is a real privilege to stand before you today, as Mayor of New Romney, and to take a moment to shine a light on something that so often goes unspoken, yet touches every part of life in our town and across the wider Romney Marsh. I am talking about volunteering: the quiet, powerful force that binds our community together.

The parished area of New Romney is home to just over 7,200 people. That figure may seem modest on paper, but behind it lies a spirit of generosity and compassion that cannot be measured by statistics. It is in the hearts and hands of those who give their time, their energy, and their care, freely, willingly, and without the expectation of reward.

Whether you are a leader in the Beavers, Cubs or Scouts; a committed member of the Romney Marsh Rotary Club; a member of the Litter Pickers; active in 'New Romney in Bloom'; a volunteer at our churches, schools, or social groups, your contribution is not just valuable, it is transformative. You are the unsung heroes. You step forward not for recognition, but because you believe that a stronger, kinder, more connected community is worth building.

And build it you do.

You offer young people a place to belong. You support neighbours in times of hardship. You protect our environment, preserve our heritage, and create places where joy, learning, and friendship flourish. The time and care you invest make our town and surrounding area richer in ways that no budget could ever buy.

As your Mayor, I see this dedication every day, often in quiet corners, often behind the scenes, but always with great impact. So, while the words "thank you" may seem small in the face of all you give, please know they are deeply meant. We owe you more than we can say.

I also want to recognise that your Town Councillors, too, are volunteers, working hard to represent and serve the people of the Coastal and Town Wards. I thank my fellow councillors for their ongoing commitment, and I know they join me in celebrating the spirit of service that defines our community.

And speaking of service, I'm delighted to share that this very spirit is being physically embodied in the soon-to-be-opened Maude Community Centre and Annexe. A new space, born of local determination, where community life can thrive: a hub for connection, collaboration, and care.

Let it stand as a symbol of what we can achieve when we work together, not for recognition, but for the love of the place we call home.

So today, I thank each and every one of you who gives your time, your skills, and your hearts for the benefit of others. You remind us all that the true strength of New Romney lies not just in its history or its buildings, but in its people: in you.

Thank you.