

RESPONSE BY CLLR N CHARD  
GRANTING OF TITLE OF HONORARY FREEMAN

Madam Town Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors,

I am so grateful to Cllrs Heron and Ford for nominating me for this honour and for the Council approving it. I am very proud to be known as the 'father' of the Council. When I first started playing football for Bisterne in 1948, I never imagined that 63 years later, I would still be involved with the Club. Nor did I imagine that when I became a Councillor, I would still be one 40 years later.

People ask me whether my work in the community has been satisfying and enjoyable or a chore. Of course there are times when we all wonder whether our voluntary work is worthwhile, but they are more than outweighed by the good times and the knowledge that the work we do here at the Town Council and we have done at the football club have been a great benefit to the people of Ringwood.

I have served with and under 13 Chairmen and Town Mayors and I have lost count – no, I never actually started counting – the number of Councillors I have served with. In my 40 years on the Council, I have served with five Town Clerks. All of them have brought something different to the table. The current Town Clerk does keep reminding us that the world is changing so fast that we have no option but to change with it. It is inevitable and none of us are wholly comfortable with that scenario and our job is to manage the situation the best we can for the benefit of the people of Ringwood.

Finally, there is one further thank you that I must make. That is to Jenny and all my family and friend who have given me immeasurable support throughout my time of public service. Without them I would not be here today, so thank you very much, and it is a great honour for me to be the first person to accept the privilege of being awarded the title of 'Honorary Freeman' of Ringwood.