

Marie



Goldman

MP for Chelmsford

# Thank you, Mike ...Chelmsford is a much better city for your efforts

**L**AST week I lost a colleague, a mentor, and a friend - and the residents of Springfield lost a dedicated local councillor who fought hard every day to help make their part of Chelmsford an even better place to live.

Councillor Mike Mackrory, my Liberal Democrat colleague, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in his sleep early last week.

Just a few hours before, I know that he was on the local elections campaign trail, distributing leaflets, seeking to be re-elected to the Springfield division of Essex County Council.

So it has come as a huge shock to all of us who knew him to learn that we will never see him again.

Although I first met Mike as a councillor at Chelmsford City Council in 2019, it was really only once I'd been elected to Essex County Council in 2021 that I really got to know him.

As the leader of the Liberal Democrats at Essex County Council, and latterly, leader of the official opposition group, Mike was well respected across the political spectrum - no mean feat in the world of politics.

But that doesn't mean he wasn't a man of conviction - his liberal values shone through in every motion he put forward and every local resident he fought for, trying to give everyone the opportunity to live their best life.

He was also incredibly supportive to me, especially as a new county councillor, including once or twice when I found myself in tricky situations that his years of experience helped me navigate. His words of wisdom and encouragement - as well as the opportunity to vent my frustrations to his sympathetic ear - will long be gratefully remembered by me.

It was a pleasure to welcome Mike and the Essex County Council Liberal Democrat group to Parliament just a matter of weeks ago. Again, another initiative of Mike's as he welcomed a new member to the group and made sure that everyone felt included and supported.

My thoughts go out to Mike's family and wide circle of friends. He will be sorely missed by all of them, including by me. Thank you, Mike, for everything you did. Chelmsford is a much better city for you.

■ When we talk about politics, we often think about Westminster, the Houses of Parliament and MPs. But there are vastly more local councillors than there are MPs across the country.

There are just 650 Members of Parliament, but well over 18,000 councillors serving on unitary, district, county or metropolitan councils.

I think councillors are often the unsung heroes of community action. They frequently get tarred with the same brush that is used for the sleaze and scandal often associated with parliamentary politics, yet many are just trying to get on with the job of serving their local communities, improving the places that they live and are elected to represent, and yes, even occasionally helping to fix the church roof.

On Thursday next week (May 7), there will be local elections across Chelmsford to elect new councillors for Essex County Council (although notably not in the Springfield division where a special election will be held in a few weeks' time).

The vast majority of the local councillors elected in these local elections, which are also happening across the country, including in London, are ordinary, hard-working people who care enough about the place they live or work (a required local connection to be eligible to stand for election) to stick their head above the parapet and ask for your vote.

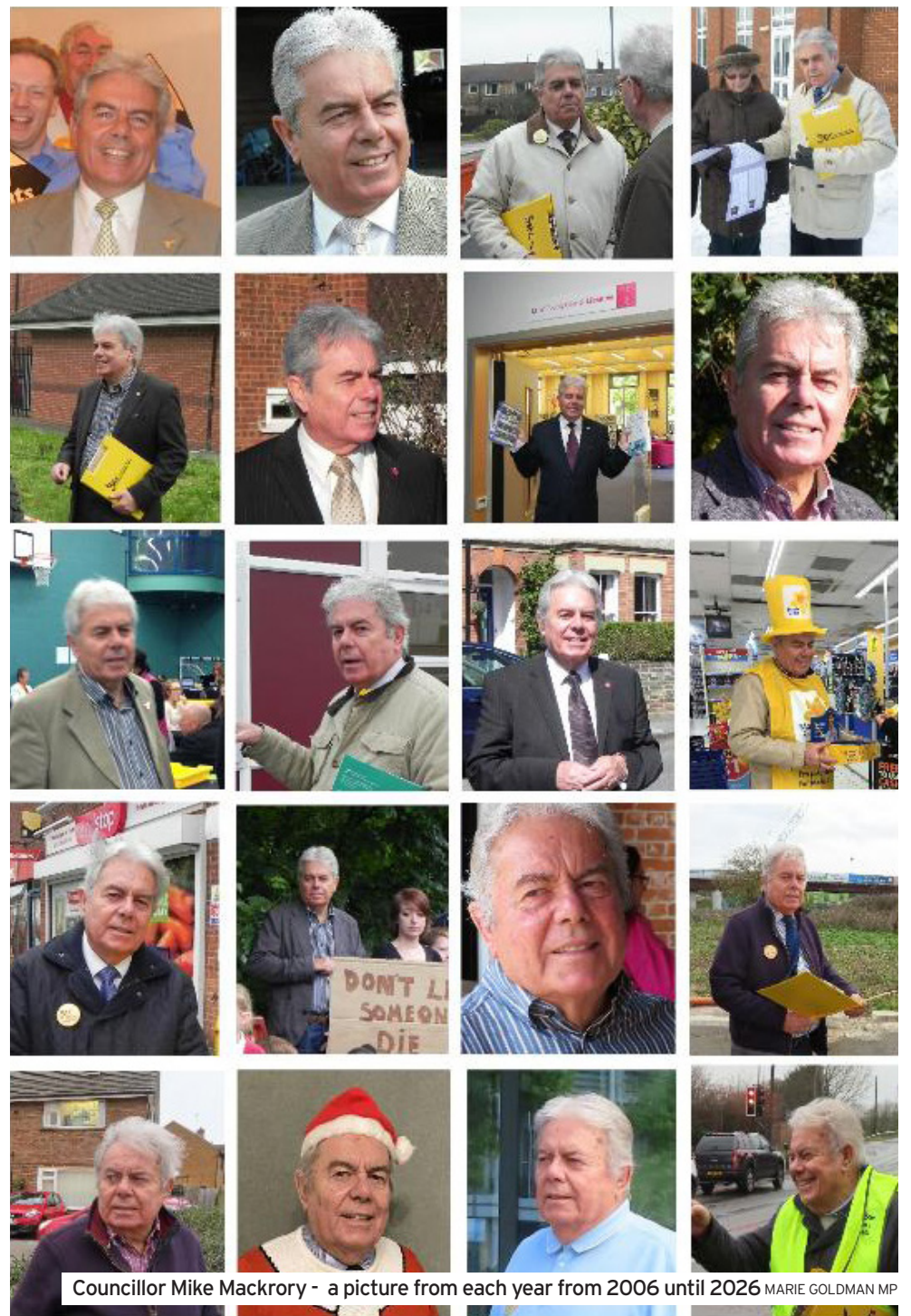
Speaking from experience as a local councillor, I know it can be a difficult and often thankless task, so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who is standing for election next Thursday.

Well done for putting yourself out there and standing up to be counted. Rather than just complaining from the sidelines, you're getting stuck in to help. That takes courage and dedication. Thank you.

■ Speaking of courage and dedication, it was my genuine honour and privilege to volunteer at the London Marathon last weekend, handing out medals to the runners just after they crossed the finish line.

It's really not an exaggeration to say that it was quite a humbling experience.

The months and sometimes years of train-



Councillor Mike Mackrory - a picture from each year from 2006 until 2026 MARIE GOLDMAN MP

ing and dedication that these impressive human beings had put in to be able to complete this world-famous one-day sporting event was etched on the faces of the runners as they approached me or one of the many other volunteers waiting to hang the coveted (and rather heavy) medal around their neck as further proof of their amazing achievement.

All the training runs in the dark, the cold and the rain in the preceding weeks and months had all come together for that moment and the looks of relief, pride and exhaustion were humbling for the volunteers to see.

For some, it was their first ever marathon. As they staggered past, many vowed it would be their last too - but you could also see the glint in their eye as they soaked up the carnival-style atmosphere, thinking that maybe they would reconsider that tomorrow.

For others, they were marathon pros - not part of the elite athletes (such as Kenya's Sabastian Sawe who became the first person in history to run an official marathon in under two hours!), but having run other marathons in the past, including one runner who proudly

told me he had run the Boston Marathon just a few days before.

Some came through proudly pointing to the number six and a star on their bib, indicating they were completing all six of the world's most prestigious marathons: Tokyo, Boston, Berlin, Chicago, New York City and London - a truly magnificent feat.

And then there were the runners who were clearly running not just for their own achievement, but they were also raising money for charity. The names of the charities, both large and small, were often emblazoned on their sweat-soaked T-shirts.

As the largest one-day fundraising event in the world, the London Marathon attracts thousands of people running to raise money for causes close to their heart. The 2025 event raised more than £73 million.

So whether you're a local councillor, working hard to serve your community, or someone dedicating their spare time to achieving personal goals and raising much-needed funds for charity, thank you for everything you do. Our country is a much better place for you. Thank you.

Marie

“Mike was well respected across the political spectrum - no mean feat in the world of politics.”

Marie Goldman MP