

Robert Everitt Memorial Award

Robert Everitt first served as a parish councillor for the parish of Wickhambrook in 1981 and was councillor and Mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, and served as a Councillor on both West Suffolk and Suffolk County Council. He sadly died in April 2025 and is much missed.

At its Annual Meeting, the parish council asked the clerk to approach Mrs Everitt with respect to setting up an award for contributions by young people in Wickhambrook Parish in his memory (Min. 26.05.26 refers), similar in nature to the existing Alf Hicks Biscuit Barrel awards presented at the Annual Parish Meeting each year.

His widow Diane and their two daughters have welcomed the parish council's proposal and would like the annual award to be called the "Robert Everitt ..."

Here is some sample text explaining the British Citizen Youth Award, on which this memorial award could be modelled:

...believe that every young person has the power to ignite change and inspire those around them, fostering a spirit of generosity and community engagement that transcends age. Our mission goes beyond recognition; it's about celebrating the remarkable stories of bravery, compassion, and innovative ideas that young individuals bring to life every day. From volunteering at local charities to leading initiatives that promote social welfare, the British Citizen Youth Award aims to shine a light on these outstanding contributions, encouraging a new generation to continue building a brighter, more inclusive future for all. Join us in honouring the visionaries of tomorrow, as we cultivate an enduring legacy of kindness and community spirit.

The parish council would need establish a clear criteria for the award, which would establish...

- 1) Age range (e.g. 18 – 25)
- 2) Group or individual
- 3) Type of contribution (e.g. volunteering, innovation, bravery, compassion)
- 4) Would the recipient of the award (which would be held for one year) have a permanent record (medal, certificate etc)

It would also need to establish legal basis of which there are three options:

- **The Chairman's Allowance**

Under **Section 15(5) of the Local Government Act 1972**, a parish council can vote to pay the Chairman an allowance to cover the expenses of their office. Many councils utilize this budget specifically for civic honors, public awards, and community recognition certificates or trophies. This is usually the cleanest method for small community awards¹.

- **General Power of Competence (GPC)**² If the parish council is an "eligible council" that has adopted the **General Power of Competence** (granted under the Localism Act 2011), it has the legal power to do anything an individual generally can do. If the

¹ The parish council would need to resolve this, and if so should adopt a policy of what expenses would be covered under this allowance

² The parish council does not currently meet the criteria for General Power of Competence as the number of members of the council that have been declared to be elected...is not equal to or greater than two thirds (five) of the total number of members on the council (eight).

council holds GPC, purchasing a trophy for an event or community champion is entirely permissible without needing a specific statutory power.

- **Section 137 (Discretionary Expenditure)**

If the council does not hold GPC and does not use a Chairman's Allowance, it can use **Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972**. This allows the council to spend money on things that bring a direct benefit to the area or its inhabitants. Section 137 cannot generally be used to benefit a single individual. However, if the award is part of a community-wide initiative (such as a "Best Kept Garden" or "Volunteer of the Year" competition) that encourages community participation and civic pride, it is widely accepted as a valid expenditure.

There is an annual allocation under Community Engagement - £750.00

A draft Biography to support the award is attached as **Appendix A**

Finally, a design would need to be agreed upon – suggestions are attached at **Appendix B**

Suggested names for the award put forward by the family include:

- Robert Everitt Wilderness Explorer
- Robert Everitt Heart and Hustle Award
- Robert Everitt "What you give you get" Award

Action:

Councillors are asked to agree items 1-4 above, with a clear indication of preferred name and style of the proposed award and any design styles to be included to enable the clerk to finalise details for a decision at the November meeting in time for a December launch.

Appendix A

Biography

Married in 1975, Robert and Diane moved to Wickhambrook in 1978 as a young couple, and shortly after, Robert got involved with the youth club and chaired it in 1979. He became vice-chair of the community association in 1981 and, learning his skills from Peter Bayman, was active in the annual Wickhambrook Fireworks display for many years.

He was also active in Amateur Dramatics, and (somewhat reluctantly – he was worried his daughter would recognise him) was a Wickhambrook Father Christmas, but drew the line at the Wickhambrook Pantomime!

He had a gift for connection; with residents, colleagues, and with causes close to his heart, from encouraging a love of reading among young people to championing those with hearing impairments and advocating for children with dyslexia.

Whether it was Robert's time as Mayor of St Edmundsbury Borough Council, or the various cabinet member positions he held, including that of Families and Communities at West Suffolk Council, or more recently becoming a County Councillor in 2017 and carrying out his duty as Chairman in 2022, Robert carried out every responsibility with warmth, dignity, and purpose.

Robert's contribution to public life and his unwavering dedication to his community spanned more than four decades, beginning in 1981 as a parish councillor in Wickhambrook. His values were clear from the very start that "you only get out of life what you put in", and Robert certainly gave his all, time and again, for the people of Suffolk.

Memories

Barbara Merritt – Wickhambrook MSC

39 years ago I did 4 years on the PC. alongside Colin Bird, Jeff Claydon and Robert, and others since passed. During 1984-1987 Kerry and I, with the help of Linda & Jim and a budding local DJ, organised junior discos for under 14's. (we had 2 nieces in the village putting pressure on us).

It snowballed and by law we needed at least 8 adults on site to supervise. ROBERT volunteered along with a few others and was very popular.

When he moved to Bury and became Mayor he was often invited back to open the carnival and be M.C. for the afternoon. He was a lovely kind man.

Hilary Workman – clerk

I first met and worked with Robert as licensing lead at West Suffolk Council. Robert was the portfolio holder for Environment and was on the Licensing Committee. He was a very kind, approachable and supportive portfolio holder, and brought both empathy and thoughtfulness to licensing committee decisions.

Appendix B

Samples of Awards



Hustle and Heart

https://www.shutterstock.com/search/hustle-heart?dd_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2Fhttps://www.vecteezy.com/search?qterm=heart-and-hustle&content_type=vector

Stronger Together

<https://www.vecteezy.com/free-vector/stronger-together>

What you give you get

https://www.vecteezy.com/search?qterm=what-you-give-you-get&content_type=vector

Wilderness Explorer

https://www.vecteezy.com/search?qterm=wilderness-explorer&content_type=vector