Barb Warwick - Freedom of the Borough Supporting Statement from Cllr. Clive Woodbridge

For more than five decades Barb Warwick has dedicated herself to voluntary service, charitable fundraising and support for veterans, patients, older people and local organisations. She has made an exceptional and sustained contribution to the Epsom and Ewell community since the 1990s when she moved into the area.

Barb's commitment to the Royal British Legion began in the late 1960s as a Poppy Appeal collector, going out with her father, and has continued throughout her life. When she moved to the Borough she continued as a collector for what was then the Ewell branch, and in 2012 became the Epsom and Ewell Poppy Appeal Organiser (PAO), a role she held until 2017. During her tenure she transformed the local appeal from a small operation involving around 20 volunteers into a borough-wide campaign involving more than ten times that number of volunteers.

Barb's involvement in the Poppy Appeal in Epsom and Ewell was extensive and wide ranging and included making up the collection rotas, arranging all the supplies to get to the various collecting locations, delivering and collecting tins, down to counting and banking the money collected. In this way Barb was directly instrumental and responsible for collecting around £500,000 from the Epsom and Ewell community during her time as PAO in support of the Poppy Appeal.

While she was PAO she was formally recognised for her achievements by the RBL at County level, being awarded the Atkinson Cup in 2017 for the PAO with the highest collection that year, and the High Sheriff Cup in 2019.

While she has now stepped back from taking the primary role in organising the Appeal, she still devotes a lot of time to helping organising the annual event and as a volunteer collector herself.

Since 2010, Barb has also played a leading role within the Epsom and Ewell Royal British Legion Branch, becoming Branch Chair in 2018 and serving on the RBL Surrey County Committee from 2020 to 2023. Her commitment to veterans goes beyond fundraising and organising events in connection with Remembrance Day. Barb is part of a small team which runs a monthly Veterans Hub to support over 40 veterans, serving and past, men and women, providing friendship, companionship and activities including indoor archery and model making, together with regular outings. She also arranges for partner agencies to attend and give veterans advice on various matters.

Barb has made an equally valuable contribution to local healthcare. Since joining the Guild of Friends of New Epsom and Ewell Community Hospital (NEECH) in 2017, she has served as membership secretary and, since 2020, as Chair. Following the closure of NEECH and the transfer of the service to Epsom Hospital as the Mary Seacole Unit caring mainly for dementia patients, Barb has continued to lead the running of the Guild and its fund for the benefit of patients and staff.

Her service to healthcare also includes four years as a trustee of Dyscover, the aphasia and stroke charity, where she served on the fundraising committee and continues to provide advice on community fundraising.

Barb has an outstanding record of charitable fundraising. Since 2016 she has organised regular quiz nights for many local charities. She has also chaired and served on several Mayoral charitable committees, including for Councillors Chris Long, Liz Frost and John Beckett, and has organised and supported several Mayor's Charity Balls and other civic fundraising events for other Mayors.

Her community service also includes serving as secretary of the Epsom Town Residents Association and as a 'Friend of Rotary'. Since 2011 she has run and supported numerous Epsom Rotary Club events and community projects, giving her time freely.

Each year Barb volunteers to collect for Epsom Rotary Club on their street Christmas collections and will always volunteer to collect on other occasions for the club when disaster strikes and collections are made in support of a particular relief fund. Barb is also responsible within Epsom Rotary Club for the welfare of ladies with a connection to the club, either as members/former members, or widows of members, and organises regular teas for these ladies.

Barb will volunteer to be a part of any event or initiative that Epsom Rotary Club runs and play an active role in the organisation. For example Barb has often taken the lead in seeking sponsorship for Club run events.

Most recently Barb was appointed chair of the Epsom and Ewell Community Fund, a local philanthropic fund that provides grants to charities and voluntary organisations across the borough and is part of the Community Foundation for Surrey.

Barb's contribution is remarkable not only for the funds she has helped raise, but for the people she has brought together, the organisations she has strengthened and the lives she has touched in an outstanding lifetime of voluntary service, community leadership and dedication to the people of Epsom and Ewell. The evidence shows that Barb Warwick has indeed rendered eminent service to the Borough of Epsom and Ewell and would be a fitting and well deserving recipient of the Freedom of the Borough.