

Last week was the Annual Council meeting, when appointments are confirmed for the coming year.

It was the first 'normal' Annual Council meeting since 2019, and it was good to be back in person.

Congratulations to Cllr Sue Murphy on being elected as Mayor for a further 12 months, and my Windle ward colleague Cllr Lynn Clarke on being confirmed as Deputy Mayor for the coming year. I know they will both do an outstanding job.

As part of the event I had the opportunity to speak about our efforts since the last meeting like this in 2019, and our plans for the next four years. You can read my speech at [sthelenslabour.org/backtowork](http://sthelenslabour.org/backtowork).

I'm ambitious for what we can achieve, and I look forward to keeping Star readers up to date throughout the year ahead.

It's set to be a special weekend across the country and we're determined to play our full part here in St Helens as we celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

Lots of people are planning street parties and other celebrations, and I want to thank all those residents, businesses and charities who are organising events – and thank you to the council officers for their hard work in facilitating all this and more.

After the last couple of years it's a huge relief that we can now get together and properly celebrate.

This Sunday also marks Thank You Day, which is a great chance to pay tribute to all those volunteers and amazing organisations who do so much for others.

We saw it throughout the lockdowns and we see it now, day after day right across the borough.

To all those who volunteer, including those who care for others, those who help to run our local sports clubs, Scouts, Brownies and Beavers, those who give a few hours a week to helping out at a community centre or even go litter picking – thank you all for everything you do.

You can find out more about all the free events planned for the extended bank holiday weekend, including beacon lightings and family fun days, at [sthelens.gov.uk/jubilee](http://sthelens.gov.uk/jubilee).

Finally this week, good luck to Jamie Leahey in the final of Britain's Got Talent this Sunday. He's hugely talented and thoroughly deserves to win! Let's get behind him and Chuck, and get voting!

Best wishes to all Star readers.