

Tributes to Devizes Mayor Andy Johnson who died suddenly

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May 26, 2020

WiltshireTimes



New Devizes deputy mayor, Andy Johnson. Photo: Siobhan Boyle

NEWLY elected Devizes Mayor Andy Johnson died yesterday after being taken ill at home.

Fellow councillors were told of the news this morning and have reacted with shock and sadness.

Former Mayor Nigel Carter said: "This is stunning and very sobering news. Andy passionately wanted to be the Mayor and was very proud to be appointed.

"That he was able to take up the role with an international audience of friends and family despite the unusual medium in which it was conducted gave him great pleasure. It really is a very sad turn of events."

Mr Johnson died on Monday evening in the Great Western Hospital after collapsing at home.

Just before he took office as Mayor Mr Johnson told the Gazette how he was disappointed not to have a full live mayor making ceremony with full pomp and ceremony but he was pleased to be able to share his big moment on Zoom.

He spoke with pride when he said: "It isn't going to happen the way I was expecting or would have liked but at least the ceremony can go-ahead. The ceremony goes back to the 13th Century and I will be the first Mayor to have a virtual mayor making.

"It will be a huge honour to become mayor but it is very disappointing that I will have to wait to be able to carry out any face to face engagements.

"I am having to isolate because of health problems. My first grandchild was born during lockdown so I have not yet managed to see her other than on a screen. It is a very strange way of life for all of us."

But he was determined to make sure that Coronavirus does not interfere with fundraising for his three chosen charities of Devizes Opportunity Centre, Devizes Foodbank and the new St James Centre.

He said: "I am looking into different ways of organising on-line activities to raise money. They are all fantastic local causes."

Cllr Johnson, a Conservative, leaves wife Kayoko, and three children. He moved to Wiltshire 21 years ago from South London and had lived in Devizes for 12 years.

He was heavily involved with youth work and charities.