

THE MAYOR OF CROYDON

& THE MAYOR'S CHARITIES 2021/2022



COUNCILLOR SHERWAN CHOWDHURY

THE MAYOR OF CROYDON COUNCILLOR SHERWAN CHOWDHURY

It is a great honour for me to become the first citizen and the Mayor of Croydon.

I am not a Croydonian by birth - for the past 42 years I have been one by choice.

I came to the UK from Bangladesh in 1976 and made Epsom my home. I worked in Croydon and attended Friday prayers at the local mosque on Wellesley Road. Attracted by Croydon's multiculturalism, I moved to Thornton Heath in 1979 and have been a Croydon resident since.

I live in Norbury, an area I have represented as a councillor since 2006, with my wife, Rohema. Our daughter and two sons grew up and were educated locally. They are all happily married, and we are proud grandparents of five beautiful children.

Growing up, I was inspired by my father's passion for community work. He was a community pharmacist, helping the poorest and most vulnerable access medical care. This inspired me to live a life which helped others. I became involved with local politics in 1990.

When I first moved to Croydon, I opened a restaurant in Thornton Heath. Later I moved into the insurance industry as a branch manager for AIG in East Croydon. Realising my passion for helping people, I changed career to work within the social housing sector which I have now done for 26 years. My wife has worked locally as a teaching assistant for nearly 30 years.

In my personal life, I have always tried to support those who need that little extra help, so that they can reach their full potential. I am a first-generation immigrant who this country has given an opportunity, and I want to ensure that every person has the same or better. That they do not face discrimination in any form, and that they get that chance to explore and secure their aspirations and dreams. To aid this, I founded an education trust to help underprivileged young people from the UK to rural villages in Bangladesh.

I was treasurer and vice-chair of Croydon Race Equality Council and helped the council promote race relations during the late eighties. I was also one of the founding directors of Race Equality Partnership Croydon. I

am enormously proud of the Bangladesh Welfare Association Croydon an organisation I helped establish and had the honour of being its General Secretary and President. I have also served as school governor for Winterbourne Boys for 14 years.

During this pandemic, our community has suffered the loss of many loved ones. Covid-19 did not discriminate, and we remember them. My priority is to help those who are suffering from their loss, while starting to lead us to a brighter, safer future. We can only get through this and come out of the other side stronger and better, by working together.

I currently represent Norbury Park Ward, and I take my role in Croydon's leadership seriously. Croydon has faced some significant challenges in the last year and as Mayor my role will also be to reach out to communities and build trust in their local authority.

THE MAYOR OF CROYDON'S CHARITY 2021-22

Everyone needs not just a house, but a home - somewhere they live comfortably with their families. Having heard many people's painful experiences of homelessness, I am passionate about ensuring no one has to live through this.

Millions of lives are lost to cancer every year. I have lost three siblings and have another who has survived this disease. I want to play my part in raising awareness and ensuring that people have access to treatment regardless of where they come from.

I have chosen three good causes to benefit from my fundraising this year:

- The Lily Pad Appeal: raising funds to create a new, state-of-the-art Children's Oncology Unit at Croydon University Hospital.
www.chartwellcancertrust.co.uk/lily-pad
- Crisis UK: the national charity for homeless people, helping people directly out of homelessness and campaigning for change. www.crisis.org.uk
- Beani Bazar Cancer and General Hospital: improving awareness of cancer symptoms among disadvantaged communities in rural Sylhet, Bangladesh.
www.bbchospital.org



THE DEPUTY MAYOR COUNCILLOR FELICITY FLYNN

I am not a native Croydonian but I have grown to love the place which I now call home.

I was born in Southport, Merseyside in 1980. Several family members were active in politics, as proud trade unionists and Labour Party members. This had a powerful impact on me in my formative years, and helped forge my values and my desire to fight for a better world.

At school in Southport I developed a love for all things creative, particularly art and music. I studied electronic media and painting at Wolverhampton University and on graduating, worked as a gallery assistant at some of London's most famous art museums.

My love for digital media and music remained, and I co-founded a music management company, arranging UK tours for US rock bands. I also studied a tattoo apprenticeship. I am very excited about Croydon being London Borough of Culture 2023 and how this can help local grassroots artists.

Meanwhile, true to my roots, I became involved in politics through the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) trade union and joined the Labour Party.

My parents - Patrick and Valerie - moved to Croydon in 2012 to be nearer me and my sister. Shortly after, I moved in with them and started to put down roots in Croydon.

I became active in the Croydon Labour Party and in 2018 I had the great honour of being elected councillor for New Addington North. My proudest achievement was helping The Family Centre Fieldway and Good Food Matters tackle food poverty during the pandemic, through ward budget funding.

Living with elderly parents has made me aware of the issues faced by people in their demographic. Alongside tackling food poverty I would like to do more work tackling social isolation among the elderly and promoting good mental health for all residents.

I am deeply honoured to be elected Deputy Mayor of Croydon - the town my family and I are proud to call home.

A MAYORAL YEAR IN CROYDON

Each year, in May, the council elects one of its 70 councillors to serve as Mayor for 12 months. He or she becomes the borough's first citizen and the ceremonial and civic head for the year.

The Mayor does not take any active political part in the council's affairs other than chairing full council meetings.

The Mayor receives members of the Royal Family and other dignitaries and VIPs on formal visits to official engagements in the borough.

During the term in office, the Mayor will attend many hundreds of events within the borough, London and other parts of the country. Each September, the Mayor attends the services of remembrance in Arnhem, Croydon's twin town.

The Mayor supports organisations that provide services to our community; these include youth, senior citizens and ethnic and cultural groups, as well as the business community, in various events and activities throughout the mayoral year.

In return, the Mayor entertains representatives in the Mayor's reception suite at the Town Hall, which is used for both formal civic and informal mayoral occasions.

In a borough as large and diverse as Croydon, it is particularly important that the Mayor appoints a Deputy Mayor to assist in carrying out mayoral engagements.

All contributions to the charity fund during the year will be received with thanks and appreciation by councillor Sherwan Chowdhury on behalf of those who stand to benefit. Cheques should be made payable to "The Mayor's Charity Appeal" (registered charity no 1042479) and sent to:

The Mayor's Parlour, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR9 1XW. Tel: 020 8760 5764.

As the Mayor's charity is registered for tax purposes, those who donate during the year are invited, where appropriate, to do so with the benefit of Gift Aid. This enables tax to be reclaimed and enhances the value of the donation. A form is available for anyone choosing to contribute in this way.

THE MAYOR'S CHAIN OF OFFICE

The 50-inch chain is made in an Italian style known as Elizabethan. Its double links – forming the monogram CC – originally stood for Corporation of Croydon. Now the CC stands for Croydon Council.

The 14 outside shields are topped by a crown supported by dolphins and roses. The three centre shields are different; they bear the coats of arms of Croydon's first three mayors - Jabez Balfour (centre), John Cooper and Reuben Barrow. The English translation of Balfour's motto is Virtue Tends Towards Heaven.

The badge was presented in 1883 by the Deputy Mayor. The borough's coat of arms is inlaid on the front while the back opens to display pages engraved with the names of past mayors.



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