

Honorary Freeman 2021

Angela Powell

In February 2021, Chippenham Town Council recognised the exceptional level of service Angela Powell has given to Chippenham by awarding her the title of Honorary Freeman.

In the May 1964 Chippenham Borough Council elections, Angela was nominated to stand for Town Ward and became the Town's youngest ever Borough Councillor.

In 1965, as Chairman of Public Health and Highways Committee, she proudly signed the first £1million cheque for a new sewage system, preparing the way for future development.

Angela became Governor of St. Paul's Primary and Ivy Lane schools, Chippenham College & Vice-Chair of Hardenhuish School. She also served on several committees including Chippenham Carnival & At Home, Pat Ward Childrens' Drama Club and Youth and Community Centre groups, encouraging young people to get involved in the community.

Angela was appointed Mayor of Chippenham Borough Council serving May 1969/1970, being the youngest mayor in the country at that time and the first to wear the new Mayoral Chain and Badge of Office. During her mayoral year, she attended some 500 engagements and made over 350 speeches in her ambassadorial role representing the town, being in demand as the guest speaker at many functions. The Mayor and her Consort, husband Michael, were presented to H.M. The Queen at a Royal Garden Party in July 1969.

In 1970 Angela was the youngest and only woman in the Borough's history to be elected to the position of Alderman. She was also sworn in as Magistrate serving regularly on the Bench at Chippenham Magistrates' Court and the Crown Court in Swindon.

She was appointed the first Chairman of the Advisory Council for BBC Wiltshire Sound, the new radio station based in Swindon and was soon broadcasting regularly from the Bridge Centre on Wiltshire tourism matters, under the title "Chippenham Calling." She was also on the BBC's Regional TV Council in Bristol.

In 1979 she initiated the setting up of a Volunteer Bureau and Information Centre in Chippenham, initially in a renovated old caravan located in what became the Emery Lane car park behind Woolworths. When this voluntary organisation was split into separate fully funded organisations, it became the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Volunteer Bureau/Council of Voluntary Service and Tourist Information Centre.

She became TIC Manager, situated in the Neeld Hall and later, Citadel offices, moving to Tourism Officer for North Wiltshire District Council in 1993 at Avon Reach and Monkton Park offices and set up the TIC in the Yelde Hall.

In promoting the town, she arranged annual events bringing over 100 West Country Tourist Attractions to a Tourism Fair in the Neeld Hall and the 3-day Classic Car Weekend Tour throughout North Wilts.

Angela also instigated the first Eddie Cochran Memorial on Rowden Hill and the annual Eddie Cochran Rock 'n' Roll Festival Weekend, which grew from small beginnings at The Olympiad to the successful 10th Anniversary Event in Monkton Park in 2004, which among others had Little Richard, The Comets, Bobby Cochran and The Crickets on the bill.

As a qualified English Tourist Board Guide, she undertook tours for West Country Tourist Board, showcasing the Chippenham area to journalists and foreign travel writers. Angela also served as a Borough Lands Trustee.

Since retiring in 2004, she has continued voluntary work including giving talks to groups, visiting elderly and care home residents, and assisting at Open Church whilst caring for her Mother, who died at the age of 101 in 2016.