

Councillor Francis Guidera Mayoral Resignation and Farewell Speech

This will be my last meeting as a borough councillor. I will be stepping down in the coming days and two of my Conservative colleagues will then immediately call for a by-election to be held at the same time as the upcoming election in May.

I'm sure this news is a surprise to some, but for those who know me personally it won't be a total surprise.

I must first thank the residents of Tilgate for their support over the past 6 years. For not only electing me but more importantly for me, re-electing me! That was the vote of confidence. It has been a huge honour to represent you all in Tilgate (a lot of work too!) but I love my role and if I could continue, believe me I would. Sadly I think the 5000 miles distance between the USA and Tilgate might prove too much even for me and these councillor roles do not belong to us. It is a vocation, we represent with the consent of our electors... and it is now someone else's turn.

I would like to thank my colleagues on both sides of the political divide. For the public it might appear that we can't stand each other, but most of us get along well and that's how it should be. This past year has shown how well things can work when we operate only in the interests of the town, putting aside party politics. After the election, I hope those of you who are re-elected can return to this working in a collegial way, and long may it continue into the future!

I would like to thank Crawley Council's Officers, or as the public might call you, the council staff! Past and present, you have been so helpful and you are the unsung heroes of the council, particularly during these difficult past 12 months.

I would like to thank my great friend, Henry Smith our M.P. for convincing me to run for election back in 2015 and for the support he has provided ever since.

Whilst I don't like to single out anyone in our group, I would like to thank former Council Leader, Bob Lanzer for being a great friend, and for his calm and measured advice over the past 6 years.

I wish my successor the very best and I hope they are ready to work as hard as I have. Tilgate's residents now have a new standard which Cllr Maureen Mwangale is fully on board with. They will expect no less and have proven that they are more than happy to kick out anyone who they feel is not up to the task, no matter how 'important' that person might feel they are...

I would lastly, but for me most importantly, like to thank my family. My mum and my recently passed dad, God rest his soul, for their love, help and support. My wife Andrea and my stepsons Alex and Sean who have all helped and supported me, and Julianna, my beloved daughter, who over the years has expressed a wish for me to stop being an elected person because she wanted her dad back. Well Julianna, no more leafleting, no

more canvassing, no more embarrassing 4 foot signs on the roof of the car, no more evening meetings. Just family.

And FACEBOOK! I'm not giving that up, EVER!

Thank you all, and let's keep fighting for Crawley!