

GERALD CEASER, FRICS, MBE
Obituary

Gerald, usually known as “Gerry”, was a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and a Member of the Association of Building Engineers by profession. He was a long-standing resident of Sunbury, having moved there from Hampshire in 1964. Gerry passed away in the early hours of Sunday 25th February 2018 at St Peters Hospital, Chertsey.

Gerry was first elected as a local Conservative Councillor for Sunbury East Ward in June 1973. He first served in the Shadow Authority of the Staines Urban District Council until the Borough Council was formed in 1974. His career at the Council spanned 34 years during which he was Leader of the Council twice, from November 1995 to May 1997 and from May 2005 to April 2007. He also had the honour of being elected as the Mayor of Spelthorne on two separate occasions, firstly in 1985/1986 and again in 2003/2004 - the first to hold the distinction for a second term.

During his long career as a Member, he served on all of the Council's Committees and was Chairman of the former Policy and Finance, Leisure and Recreation and Planning Committees. He was Vice-Chairman of the Staines Central Area Development Committee [Elmsleigh Centre] when this was opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 22 February 1980. He served on the Planning and Development Committee from 1998 to 2005. As the Leader of the Council for his second term of office, he was also the Chairman of the Executive from May 2005 to April 2007 and was the Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy and Performance Management. He was a Council representative on the Spelthorne Business Forum from 1995 to 2007 and was also a Council representative on the South East Employers for the same period.

During his civic career, Gerry was involved with many civic issues, including:

- playing a key role in the redevelopment of Staines Town Centre;
- playing a key role in the redevelopment of the multi award-winning Sunbury Walled Garden, in particular the Millennium Embroidery exhibition located there;
- launch of the Spelthorne in Bloom campaign in 1989;
- helped establish Staines Shopmobility;
- helping form Spelthorne Young Voices; and
- the inception of the Surrey Youth Games in 1997

Gerry was very keen on promoting sport. He was the South East Sport Chairman for 10 years and held a seat on the National Sports Council. He was also Chairman of the Surrey Youth Games Management Committee for 9 years and was a proud patron since helping to set it up in 1997. During his time as a leading figure in the Surrey Youth Games, over 57,000 young people benefited from free sports coaching and the Games have gone from strength to strength. He also set up County Sports bodies in Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex and Thames Valley.

Along with his passion for sport, Gerry had a keen interest in the welfare and opportunities of young people. He was a Governor of Bishop Wand School and played a leading role in the school's bid for Sports College Status. He was a Board Member and later Trustee of the National Association of Clubs for Young People, and a Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Middlesex Young People's Clubs for over 20 years. He was Chairman of "Friends of Sunbury Park", and was instrumental in obtaining funding towards the Natural Play Area in Orchard Meadow, Lower Sunbury, opened in April 2016.

As well as his many civic duties, Gerry helped set up a number of local charity events, including the Mayor's Fun Day, Donkey Derby, Sunbury's Picnic in the Park and Carols at Christmas. He chaired the Local Authorities' Aircraft Noise Council for over 10 years and represented Spelthorne on the Heathrow Airport Consultative Committee. His work on these airport-related bodies helped mitigate various environmental issues within the Borough, including airport parking and transport links as well as air pollution and aircraft noise, and presented sponsorship opportunities for Borough community events. He was a Trustee of the Spelthorne Mayors Charity Fund.

Gerry has been a pivotal local figure at the forefront of Political, Civic and Community life including as a long standing member of the Spelthorne Civic Awards Trust, which was recognized in October 2007 when he was awarded Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Spelthorne.

Above and beyond all his Civic and Community achievements he was a successful local business man and a loving husband, father and grandfather. Gerry was married for 54 years to Zandra and father to a son Martin and daughter Alison, grandfather of four and great grandfather of two.

Cllr Ian Harvey Leader of Spelthorne Borough Council said "On behalf of all at Spelthorne Borough Council, and across the Borough, from those whose life Gerry impacted in one way or another, I express our sincere condolences to Gerry's widow, Zandra, and family. Gerry has been a personal friend for a number years and indeed was my personal mentor. He will be greatly missed by us all".

Memorial details to follow.