

20th September 2026

As Mayor of Millom, it is my honour to stand before you today as we gather in gratitude for our community, for those who serve it, and for the future we are building together.

Millom is a town shaped by resilience and by the determination of its people. From our industrial heritage to the beauty of our coastline and fells, from the strength of our families to the dedication of our volunteers, this is a place where community is not just a word — it is a way of life.

In recent years, the Millom Town Deal has become a symbol of that resilience and ambition. It represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to invest in our town's future: improving our infrastructure, strengthening our local economy, enhancing our leisure and cultural spaces, and creating new opportunities for residents young and old.

As Mayor, I believe our town owes a great debt of gratitude to David Savage, Chair of the Millom Town Board. I would like to thank him publicly for his tireless work, dedication and determination in keeping these projects on track, with one completed and the second now nearing completion. Although the community sees the construction sites and disruption to traffic, much of the work behind the scenes goes unnoticed.

These projects — from revitalising our town centre to improving connectivity, from developing new community facilities to supporting skills and employment — are not simply investments in buildings or services. They are investments in people. They are investments in Millom's confidence, its potential, and its long-term wellbeing.

David will step down after seven years of negotiations, lengthy meetings and countless phone calls, leaving behind an outstanding legacy.

But leadership in Millom is not held only in council chambers or official offices. It is found in those who give their time freely, those who support neighbours in need, those who champion local causes, and those who help keep our community strong and safe. The success of our town — depends on all of us.

I would like to remind you of the reading Psalm 91:

***“He will cover you with his feathers,
And under his wings you will find refuge;”***

As a Town Council there are many occasion where we are also the feathers of refuge for our community.

One well-known North American Indigenous narrative is the **Legend of the Talking Feather**, a story that blends the sacred symbolism of feathers with moral lessons about listening, respect, and the power of words.

The Legend of the Talking Feather

In the tale, a village is disturbed by a noisy quarrel between Crow and Magpie, two birds who argue over a tree. Their cacophony disrupts the peaceful dreams of children sleeping in the lodge. An elder grandmother, tasked with caring for the young, prays to her Creator for silence. Instead, her Creator sends her a **feather** — a gift that can speak.

This feather is not ordinary; it is a living extension of the bird’s spirit, capable of carrying messages and teaching wisdom. The grandmother uses it to mediate the dispute, showing that true resolution comes from **listening to all sides** and speaking with respect. The feather’s ability to “talk” symbolises the

importance of clear, respectful communication and the responsibility of those in leadership roles to guide with wisdom.

As we join in this civic service, may we be guided by wisdom and strengthened by unity. May our decisions reflect compassion, our actions reflect courage, and our shared purpose reflect the belief that every resident of Millom and Haverigg matters.

Let us continue to serve with humility, to lead with integrity, and to work together for the good of Millom - for the good of Haverigg — today, and for generations to come. We are all a talking feather!