

Thank you for letting me speak (possibly given the lateness of the hour, having the last word).

I am sure we all applaud and support the statement by the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Group leaders, and therefore on our behalf too.

However, I think there is merit in also having a statement from a humble backbencher, in my case someone who has very much benefitted from the efforts of officers to keep the council running and provide the support I need, especially in the IT department. Indeed, I expect we could all think of some extra help we have received, in Catholic theology, 'a work of supererogation' – going above and beyond anything one might expect from someone. In 2017 Westfield Parish Council and Radstock Museum put on an exhibition about the history of Westfield with the theme of 'ordinary people doing extra-ordinary things'. I suspect our officers would say they were just doing their job, but we ought to recognise their valour.

As the out-going Chair of Council, I started thinking about awards, like the Chair's awards for community service, and I asked the CEO, Mr Godfrey to think about this. It is a problem that our residents get recognition, and councillors can be nominated for honours, but officers are invisible, and perhaps not sufficiently appreciated.

Then I remembered this medal which my father received in 1945. It is not the Arctic Star awarded for valour on the North Sea convoys nor for any personal act of heroism, but it is the 'spam' medal, given to all veterans of WW2. I would like the 'powers that be' to consider some certificate, or better still a 'covid bonus' for all our officers, who have come through this extraordinary situation with so much courage and courtesy, and to have a positive commendation for their C.Vs, though I hope they will stay with us for a long time yet.