

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming to this historic occasion.

The Mayoralty of Evesham was created by Royal Charter in 1605, and over more than four centuries and more than 400 Mayors later, King Charles III is now the 19th monarch to whom we have pledged our allegiance.

Once upon a time, this is how everyone would have heard of the accession of a new monarch. The palace would proclaim it, and then send riders on horseback to shires, where the sheriffs would proclaim it, and they in turn would send riders to the towns and boroughs for the Mayors to proclaim it.

Modern technology has changed that. Queen Victoria was the first whose accession announcement was conveyed by steam train rather than stage coach. King Edward VII was the first whose accession was announced by the electric telegraph. Edward VIII was the first whose accession was announced on the radio. And now Charles III is the first whose accession has been announced on the Internet. Technology changes, but our traditions remain. I stand here before you just as my predecessors have done.

Only 17 previous Mayors of Evesham have stood here to read the Accession Proclamation, and the last time it happened was longer ago than any previous gap between them. This is the end of an era, and none of us here today will see another like it.

As we move from the Second Elizabethan age – the Great Elizabethan age – into a new Carolean age, we look both back and forward. Back to our history and our traditions which have survived wars, plagues and disasters as well as triumphs and have come through them all with renewed strength, and forward to the world that you and I are responsible for making.

The new King deserves our support and our commitment. The country he rules over, the towns, villages and cities in which we live and work, deserve it even more. Now is the time to renew our promise to the next generation that we will bequeath them a world which is better than the one we inherited.

And when the time comes for one of my successors to stand here again, whenever that may be, I trust that whatever part of his or her speech that looks back to today will be able to reflect on the progress that has been made, just as I can reflect on progress since the previous Accession.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming today. But more than that, thank you for where you're going after today. Thank you, now, for the work that you will do in the coming years to make this, too, a glorious age. Thank you.