

As you may be aware, RRAVS recently held it's 2011 at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh on Wednesday 27th July 2011. The Rt Hon Mark Francois, MP for Rayleigh and Wickford attended in his role of RRAVS Honorary President and had the following comments to make:



*“Chairman, Directors, Trustees, Councillors, Ladies and Gentlemen. Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words. I am very proud to be the Honorary President of RRAVS and President of Wyvern Community Transport, who are also represented here today. Can I also take the opportunity to commend you, Mr Chairman on the efficient way in which this meeting has been conducted.*

*I will keep these words short, mindful of what the HRH The Duke of Edinburgh once reportedly said about a sermon at Balmoral – “The brain cannot absorb more than the backside can endure”!*

*I do endeavour to be an active President and have visited RRAVS’ new premises and many of the Community Open Days over the last few years.*

*As an MP I receive a considerable amount of correspondence each day and I always ensure that any news or updates on charitable funding or grant awarding bodies are forwarded to Derek Helson and Shelley Hall at RRAVS.*

*I am very aware that RRAVS have had a successful year despite the difficult economic climate. It continues to provide a volunteer service to the community and if it were to cease to exist, we would have to invent it again!*

*I was asked about “The Big Society”. To me, this really means people giving of their spare time to help others in their community, and RRAVS already does this and helps other groups to do the same. We have heard fitting tributes to RRAVS from some of these groups today.*

*With regard to The National Lottery – as a District, we have done alright with gaining small grants from programs such as Awards for All. However, having done some research, in terms of larger grants (i.e. six figure sums), it transpires that we have done less well than other parts of the country. I will now endeavour to try and persuade some of the grant funding bodies, including the Big Lottery Fund, to address this imbalance and I wish to work closely with RRAVS in order to try and achieve this.*

*I would like to conclude with two words – “Thank You”. For all RRAVS do in this community and to for the help you give your fellow members despite challenging circumstance. I wish you a successful year ahead.*

**The Rt Hon. Mark Francois MP  
MP for Rayleigh and Wickford**