

Mayor's Report to Havant Borough Council - 27th July 2016

As I write, I am just coming up to the end of my first 10 weeks in office as Mayor – and have loved every moment. There have been many highlights, too many to mention each one, but standing out have been the three Civic Services, and Armed Forces Day each different in their own way, and taking considerable planning to ensure that each was special, and suitably marked the occasion. Many thanks to all the Councillors who supported these occasions, in particular Cllrs Mike Cheshire and David Smith. We have had a number of compliments on the arrangements for these, and I am so grateful for all the help we have had from my Chaplain, the ministers and congregations at the churches and from the Royal British Legion.

I am a bit of a statistical nerd, and during these first 10 weeks, I have had 80 formal engagements, and additionally 8 informal (like the monthly walks) and 8 meetings planning future events. Of the 70 days, I have only had 13 free of engagements – and those are quickly taken up with ward and council duties and seminars. I have been out of the house for almost 250 hours on Mayoral duties – sometimes for as much as 8 hours without a break. I would like to thank the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Elaine Shimbart, for stepping in to take over when there has been a clash of engagements, and when I have also had significant family events to attend to. Michael, my consort, has been able to come with me on at least 50 of the engagements to which a consort was invited; where he was unable to, I have often been able to include my grandson or other Borough residents, which has brought them great pleasure. Michael has certainly been a hit at many of the events we have attended, notoriously the Leigh Park Queen's birthday street party, where we joined in with a Fit 'n Funky fitness session – the Youtube video of this (which can be seen on the Havant Borough Council facebook page) has been viewed across the world, with over 5000 hits!

It has been good to be at the beginning of enterprises which will bring people into the Borough, as well as jobs. Obviously opening the new Marks and Spencers in Solent Road, was a key moment, but it was good to welcome in a new industry and new estate agents in Waterlooville, as well as the changed ownership (and expansion) of a day nursery in my own ward. It has also been good to encourage the events taking place, which again bring visitors into the Borough. Standing out amongst these was the Virgin Kitesurfing Armada, which I visited each day, with the successful achievement of the record for the highest number of kitesurfers completing a mile course offshore. They have just sent me a video of the event, in which they are really complimentary about the support from the Borough and there is to be another one out soon, which will be going worldwide, putting **our** Borough on the map. I popped back last Saturday to see the training day they had for young kitesurfers on the beach, and even had a go myself!!

One of the great pleasures has been to enjoy plays and concerts in all parts of the Borough. I am ashamed to say that although we have lived for over 37 years in the Borough, we had never been to the Hayling Island Station Theatre to see the HIADS performances, and both thoroughly enjoyed the two we have attended so far. The Hampshire Police Male Voice choir were outstanding as part of the Waterlooville Music Festival and it was good to see our own Cllr Paul Buckley starring in Havant Light Opera's production of the Savoy Opera, 'Yeomen of the Guard'. Not only have

all these given us great enjoyment, but it is good to encourage the talented young and old residents of the Borough. Special mention must be made of the recent Dynamo Youth Theatre's production of 'The Roses of Eyam' in St. Faith's Church, which was memorable for the way they used the church, both inside and outside for some of the scenes... the 'ghosts' of those who had died in the plague-hit Derbyshire village, moved the audience around eerily.

I said on May 11th that I hoped to visit as many schools and places of worship in the Borough as I could, and am really impressed by the work that goes on steadily and quietly through the year. We have some amazing young people growing up, and our teachers can be really proud of the hard work they put in to encourage them.

Among our faith congregations again, much excellent work goes on in providing fun and support for the community... like the Empower Centre from Leigh Park, who put on the Fun Day in Havant Park completely free, and the New Life Church in Emsworth who have flourishing Boys' and Girls' Brigades. As a former Group Scout Leader, it has been good to be reminded by Hayling and Bedhampton Scouts of the fun and laughter they share, leaders and young people alike. It is also important to value the work done in putting on fun events like the school fairs, Waterlooville Classic Car and Bike Display, the Bedhampton Show, and the Leigh Park Carnival... I know only too well the effort it takes in providing events like these for the pleasure of the communities. Without our volunteers, the backbone of our communities, our Borough would not be the vibrant place it is.

It is also a caring community... as witnessed by the donations that came flooding in to the fund started by bus driver, Craig Cockram, to make a permanent memorial to Missy, the Bus stop Cat, in Dunsbury Way. It has not only been a privilege to be there to unveil the wooden bench, with the carved replica of Missy, but also to visit two of our care homes, and the Emsworth Stroke Club, to see the quiet love and support given there to our more vulnerable residents, as well as to hear of the work done by volunteers in our local Samaritans and the CAB in helping our residents.

It has been an eye-opener to see some of the opportunities available for residents... for instance, I was not aware that the Avenue Lawn Tennis Club in Warblington, also had a small gym and has fitness classes and a bridge club meeting there, and to see again the wonderful work produced at Making Space and our artists and artisans showing their work at the 'May Days'.

I am delighted that two of my initiatives got off to a good start, which I hope will be continued next year, the School Ambassadors and the 'Fun for the Young' event. We are now looking forward to the 'Celebration of Age' on August 25th, and I am also delighted that the Havant Athletic Club will be organising the inaugural Havant 10k run on September 25th, starting in Staunton Country Park. I hope many councillors and staff will take part in this, and possibly get sponsorship for my charities.

I am most grateful to Cllr Mike Fairhurst and his organising group for arranging the Mayor's Charity Golf Day, which has raised over £800, and other monies are steadily coming in from a garden party organised by former Cllr Ann Buckley, a talk I gave to Emsworth Baptist Church, and, wonderfully, a donation of over £1000 from Tesco in Solent Road. I hope councillors will support the Charity Hallowe'en Quiz Night, and have the date for the Charity Christmas Ball firmly in their diaries.

I could not achieve nearly as much as I have been able to in this first 10 weeks without the steady and constant support of Anne Thurlow, Neill Payne and the team

of drivers, who quietly enable all the engagements and other events to take place and support me in all that I am trying to achieve. I hope to have the blog up and running fully by the time you read this, and I have also just opened up a Facebook page, which is entitled Mayor of Havant, or found by going to www.facebook.com/HavantMayor1

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