

Mayor's Report to Full Council – 22 January 2020

On the 9th October we enjoyed a wonderful day at HMS Collingwood for the Royal Naval Benevolent Trust Annual Presentation. This, like so many of the Service charities is such an amazing organisation and it was a pleasure to support it.

The following day, we attended the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire awards ceremony at the Winchester Guildhall for SERFCA the reserve forces association. It was wonderful to be amongst so many uniforms with individuals from all walks of life who give their time so willingly to join our forces and serve as reservists. Thank you for everything you do for this country.

On Sunday 13th October we joined the Lord Mayor of Portsmouth at the annual Seafarers service in Portsmouth Cathedral. What a spectacular cathedral this is and what a moving service. However, to say the weather was inclement would be an understatement! It threw it down and the poor Lord Mayor had difficulty throwing his wreath into the sea off the sea wall. However, we all braved the storm and laid our wreaths at Nelsons memorial.

A very different engagement happened on the 16th October when my Consort and I became models for the evening at the Edinburgh Woollen Mill shop in Waterlooville in aid of my two charities. It was a fun evening and took me back to my modelling days a million years ago!

November was a massively busy month. On the 2nd we had four engagements starting with the launch of the U3A Book launch at the Royal British Legion on Hayling Island. U3A have produced a wonderful book which took two years in the writing, on the history of Hayling Island between 1919-46. They also put on a wonderful exhibition of wartime memorabilia which was very well presented and worth viewing.

In the afternoon I went to Havant Library to meet up with BrendonCare, an organisation that helps people suffering loneliness or dementia, and other mental and social difficulties who come together to socialise and prevent isolation. In the evening we went to the re-opening of the newly refurbished Ship Inn at Langstone which is beautiful, and then straight on to the Hayling Island Amateur Dramatics Society to see their production of Murder in Play.

On Sunday 3rd November, we had the pleasure of joining all my family for the Christening of my youngest granddaughter Ellodie, at Saint Johns Church in Purbrook. It was done during the morning service, so the church was full, and it was a very happy occasion.

On November 5th, I started the fireworks display at Stockheath Common. It was the first live fireworks display I have ever been to and I'm afraid I spent half an hour feeling like a child again. It was wonderful, very well organised, and on the right date so all a bonus!

On the 7th November my Consort and I were back with U3A at a service at the beautiful St. Mary's Church for a special dedication of an additional Memorial Plaque to honour the names of a further nineteen servicemen from the Island killed during the war. Students from Hayling College also attended and sang for us, and candles were lit for each name remembered and read out. The service ended with a young lady from Hayling College singing "When the Boys come home" solo, and A Cappella which totally reduced me to tears and it was so poignant and beautiful. In the afternoon, we attended Hayling College to launch WAVE a project being aided by Youth Services and bringing surfing and water sports to young people who would not normally be able to join in. In the evening, not as Mayor but in my role of President of the St John Ambulance Havant, I presented a long service medal to one of the Brigade volunteers.

On Saturday 9th November, I went to the 110th birthday party of the 2nd Waterloo Scout Group, and visited their amazing exhibition of all thing scouting through the years, followed by cutting their cake for them. It was great to see so many young people enjoying being involved in such a great organisation. This followed straight into a Peace Conference with United Kingdom Islamic Mission where I had to give a speech.

On the 10th November it was of course Remembrance Sunday, and it was an honour for both of us to march from the British Legion Club in Havant through the town to St Faith's Church, accompanied by 16 Regt. Royal Artillery, and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight cadet force band. A service and a laying of wreaths was held at the war memorial, followed by a wonderful service in the church which was very well attended. I read a poignant poem during the service by the poet Pam Ayres called "Down The Line" and I can recommend it to anyone to read as it is truly moving. The following morning, we attended the Remembrance Service at the Emsworth Memorial Garden. It was absolutely freezing, but nonetheless a lovely service.

On the 12th November, we had a very different engagement when we attended the Junior Citizen Day at Fort Purbrook. This was extremely interesting, and the children were given talks by the police, RNLI, animal welfare and many other organisations. The following day I was back with the U3A on Hayling Island to unveil a plaque in the Community Centre to civilians who lost their lives on the Island during the war. This is the only plaque of its kind to civilian casualties in the Borough.

A complete change of scene the following day as the Consort and I arrived at the Hermitage Stream to plant some fruit trees. It was most definitely welly boot weather as the ground was thick wet clay and you could hardly lift your boots out of the mud let along a spade full of mud to fill in the holes around the new trees. However, there was much merriment and laughter whilst we set about the task and I had to wash my boots in the stream afterwards as I couldn't get back into the Mayoral car with half a field on my boots!

Two days later, we were all smartened up to go to Portsmouth Naval Base to witness the arrival of HMS Prince of Wales. What an amazing sight! It is enormous, and it was lovely to see all the crew marching on deck to the ships rails to salute the crowd as she came alongside. She had been at sea on trials

for some time, and it was lovely to see all the families waiting for their loved ones, and being able to go on board to greet them and welcome them home.

To help along the fund raising for my two charities I also organised a bucket collection for that Saturday at Tesco in Havant. My Consort and I spent an hour and a half with colleagues collecting for the charities before I left the team to rush down to the naval base, to then rush back to Tesco to carry on collecting. Thank you to all those who donated towards my two charities, SSAFA and Dementia Friendly Hampshire. I am very grateful. We will be doing more collections over the months to raise fund for these very worthwhile charities.

On Thursday 21st November, we attended the AGM for "Off the Record" in Leigh Park, followed on the Saturday by the first of the Christmas Lights events in Waterlooville. Once again, the weather was not kind to us, and we got absolutely soaked as did the entire organising team, who had gone through at least three changes of clothes during the afternoon. It was still so good to see so many people turn out though for the event.

The final week of November saw me visit a pop up shop in Emsworth, followed on the Wednesday by an amazing Mayors Christmas Coffee Morning at the Plaza. The place was mobbed, and we ran out of tables and chairs, but we had a fantastic morning with singing from the children of St. Thomas More's School who were brilliant, two auctions of a kindly donated and amazing chocolate and orange cake, and a beautiful painting from a local artist, and a raffle. All the proceeds went to my charity appeal. Thank you to everyone who came along and supported and I'm sure you had a good time!

On the evening of the 28th November, I went to the Portsmouth Grammar School production of the musical "Bring it on" at the Kings Theatre. It was a very professional production and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Finally, on the 29th November my Consort and I went to Emsworth for a Carol service and to turn on the Christmas lights. Once again it was freezing, but there were plenty of hardy souls who turned out with all the children to enjoy seeing the arrival of Santa on his sleigh.

December engagements began on the 6th with the Hayling Lions and the turning on of the Christmas lights at Mengham. Although cold there was a very good turnout, and everyone had a good time. On Saturday 7th, I attended the Havant Light Opera performance of Christmas Masquerade which had plenty of wonderful songs in it to make the audience want to sing along! On Sunday 8th we attended the Gosport Civic Carol Service on a very cold evening, but in the glorious surroundings of the 323-year-old Holy Trinity Church.

The big event of the month was attending the commissioning of the aircraft carrier The Prince of Wales, in Portsmouth dockyard. It was such an honour to be invited. The ceremony took place in the hanger of the ship with all the dignitaries, and families and friends of the crew. A wonderful Welsh Male Voice Choir entertained us with some stirring vocals, and the band of the Royal Marines played their hearts out. There was much marching of sailors, and parading of colours and in all it was an amazing day, and one I was very proud to be a part of. James and I also got to shake hands with the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall.

On December 12th we of course had the General Election. Earlier in the evening we attended a Christmas "At Home" with the Mayor of Chichester in the Assembly Rooms. This is quite a spectacular building inside, and it was a pleasure to support one of our neighbouring authorities. Following that, I attended the count in the Plaza and as Returning Officer announced the result of the General Election for Havant. On Friday 13th I attended the Carol Service for Portsmouth Grammar School in the spectacular Portsmouth Cathedral in the old High Street. The service was wonderful with the school choir's beautiful young voices really bringing the Christmas spirit to all who attended.

Later in the evening we drove to the New Forest and attended the Civic Carol Service at Beaulieu abbey, another glorious old church.

The following day I attended the Federation of Townswomen's Guild Carol Service in Fareham, and completed my day with a concert by the Hayling Island Choir.

December 15th saw me attending the Christmas party at Springfield Care Home in Emsworth. It was a very joyous and festive occasion and the residents all had a very good time. This was immediately followed by a concert in Emsworth Baptist Church, given by the wonderful Emsworth Concert Band. It was a fabulous programme of music which I thoroughly enjoyed.

On December 17th I attended a Christmas Coffee morning in support of the St. John Ambulance where James and I were subjected to a tricky quiz as part of the entertainment! We didn't disgrace ourselves, but we could definitely have done better!

The evening saw us attending Cowplain School to watch their production of "Now that's what I call a show" which was absolutely excellent, and all credit to the cast. December 18th brought a very different event with James and I decorating trees in Brook Meadow Field in Emsworth with children from Emsworth schools. It was lovely to see all the decorations the children had made and were then hung on living trees.

My final engagement of the year was the Havant Rotary and St Faiths Carol Service where I read a poem and sang my heart out with all the wonderful carols, full choir and three lady trumpeters who were fabulous!