



Mayor's Report
Wednesday 23rd September 2020

What an honour it was to have been chosen by my fellow members to become the 47th and youngest Mayor of Havant on July 22nd at our first ever virtual Mayor Making ceremony. Diving into the deep end, holding such an important meeting of the Council in this hybrid format certainly came with an element of risk, but I was very pleased with how the meeting itself ran, reinforced by extremely positive comments from other authorities such as Southampton and Portsmouth who I am told will be taking a leaf from our book moving forward in this virtual world. As many of you know in addition to our internal platform, we had over 300 public viewers from across the globe in Australia, Spain, New Zealand and Canada to name a few. Viewers also included our Chief Inspector of Police, local MP's, a knight of the realm, the Commander of HMS Excellent and other Mayor's and Chairs. It is a real compliment to us as a Council that we were able to open the meeting to anyone, anywhere and that we were able to hold the most accessible and well attended meeting in our history. The Lord Mayor of Portsmouth wrote a lovely letter to me after the meeting expressing how impressed he was with our efforts, again a testament to the efforts of our officers and members.

We had some really good coverage in the Portsmouth news and the following day I was invited to speak on BBC Radio Solent about being the youngest Mayor of Havant and to talk about the role of a modern Mayor. The interview with Sam Fraser went very well and many people I've met at events since have mentioned they listened in on the day which was nice to hear. With restrictions still very tight, I turned my focus to updating the Mayor's page on the HBC website. My vision was to have a modern page that included all the relevant information anyone would need to know about the Mayoralty. The team under Cllr Rennie's portfolio helped me to achieve this vision, revamping the page to include elements such as; pictures, videos, descriptions of the role, a section introducing the Mayoress, the Mayor's Chaplain, my chosen charity including how to donate, my Mayor's cadets and links to social media pages. The part I'm most pleased with is the ability for me now to be invited to an event by clicking an invite button on the page which takes you to an online form that gets submitted straight to our office. It's never been easier to invite the Mayor to an event and most of the events we've attended so far have come through this system. I've also ensured the proforma we use has been updated to reflect the world we now find ourselves in. My thanks go to the officers who have assisted me with these tasks and also to the Leader for his unwavering support in these unique times as the new cabinet lead for the Mayoralty.

In my address to Council I talked about engaging with local businesses, with this in mind I ensured that every Councillor was given a small collection pot to place in a local business in their ward. This allows us as members to connect with our local businesses, to be seen by our residents and for funds to be raised for the Mayoral appeal. Thank you to all members that have taken part in this effort, if you could regularly check up on your pot and hand any raised funds to Anne keeping the pot in place that would be appreciated.

My first in person event was attending the opening of the lockdown library in Denvilles on August 3rd. I had the opportunity to meet the local community who had worked tirelessly to get the reading project up and running, ensuring everyone has access to books and the chance to read. I spoke with a lot of the younger children who will be using the library and they were so excited to have a project like that on their road that they could use whenever they wanted. I also gave a book to the effort that joined the hundreds of others that will be shared amongst the Denvilles community. Thank you to Sarah Kirby and to Cllr Branson for organising such a lovely event.

On August 8th I had the pleasure of helping to re-open Horizon Leisure centre in Waterlooville. I was afforded the opportunity to see the huge amount of work that Howard and his team had done to ensure that the entire centre and all of their facilities were covid secure and safe for everyone to use. The level of consideration and safety measures in place were clear to see, indeed I may have to pay a visit to lose some of those lockdown pounds!

On Saturday 15th August Sophie and I were truly privileged to have attended the VJ Day 75 service at St Faith's Church, where we remembered all those that fought in the Far East, helping to conclude the Second World War. Many that fought in the South East Asia and Pacific Commands considered themselves as the 'forgotten army', days like VJ Day ensures that their story is told and that their sacrifice and contribution will never be forgotten. A massive thankyou to Cannon Tom Kennar for putting together the service and to all those including Sophie that joined me in speaking to help commemorate such a significant day. I had the honour of giving a statement on behalf of the Borough and read the names of the soldiers on our War Memorial that fought during the Second World War. Our service was printed in the Portsmouth News as a main article, testament to Cannon Kennar and to all those that were involved to mark VJ Day 75.

Prior to the service, I was invited back to BBC Radio Solent for their breakfast show to talk about VJ Day and what was planned for the day. I spoke about the part I was playing, why the Council wanted to mark the event, who I would be thinking about during the service, how people could take part and also I gave a message to veterans on this special day. If anyone is interested in listening to either of my BBC Radio interviews, they can be accessed on the main BBC website under the radio section as a sound clip.

Cllr Scott who has set up WAVE, has kindly asked me to become the inaugural patron of the charity. I accepted this gratefully as I know how much work Cllr Scott has put into forming the charity that works with younger people in the Borough. This new role adds to the following list that the position of Mayor assumes upon taking office;

- Havant Rugby Football Club – Vice President
- New Theatre Royal – Ex-Officio Trustee
- Waterlooville Motorcycle Club – Honorary Member
- Hayling Island Operatic Society – Honorary Life Vice-President
- Bereavement Care Group (Havant) – President
- International Association of Lions Club – Honorary Member
- Guild of Friends, Warblington Church – Honorary Member

- Havant Literary Festival - Patron
- Havant and District Orchestra – Patron
- Emsworth Stroke Club – Honorary President
- Wave – Patron

On August 19th I visited the innovative Connect4Summer 2020 programme being run at Park Community School that makes such a difference to local families. Mr Anders talked to Sophie and I about the wonderful work being achieved by the school and this summer project that enables the site to act as a social hub for the community. We recognised the incredible efforts of educational staff across the Borough during the pandemic and wished students the best of luck with their GCSE results being delivered the following day. Park have just opened their new tea rooms in Staunton Country Park, please do check it out when you have the chance!

On Friday 21st August we visited Motiv8 in Leigh Park, seeing the positive work being done to assist young people in the Borough. Sophie and I joined in with a detached session and met some young people at the local park, listening to their views and hearing their stories. It was a very insightful afternoon and we look forward to the charity continuing to support our younger people.

The Mayoral scissors given to the Council by Cllr Weeks in 2011 were put to excellent use the following day as Sophie and I opened Mary Puppins Pet Pantry in Emsworth. In my address to Council at Mayor Making I spoke about supporting and promoting local businesses across the Borough and it's so exciting to see a business like Mary Puppins opening its doors – I know it will be a treat for all that visit!

On Monday 24th August I had the honour of presenting John Ellis with his 100th birthday letter from the Queen and to raise a glass to celebrate an amazing gentleman. I also presented John with a letter from myself and Sophie, along with a clock emblazoned with our crest of arms. So much has changed in the past century; the first world cup, a man on the moon, the breaking of the enigma code and victory in the Second World War - It's people like John that have been the constant and we look forward to the years ahead with him.

On Wednesday 26th August I had my official Mayoral photograph taken. It's incredibly important for me to balance the tradition and history of the Mayoralty, along with new innovative ideas that adapt the role to the modern day. The portrait captures that balance, with me in full robes and chain along with my laptop, acknowledging our first ever virtual Mayor Making and showing that tradition and the virtual world we find ourselves in can work side by side.

Continuing to buck the trend with a busy August, I joined Jon Mines and the Leigh Park Dog Walkers on the 29th August at Staunton Country Park for their weekly walk. It was so nice to see how this community group has grown into such a welcoming social hub and has made such a difference to local people's lives as well as being such a wonderful place in the Borough to bring their dogs for a walk in the outdoors. I look forward to heading back to

Staunton to see the tea rooms, museum and to opening the Memorial Woodland nearby in the near future.

On August 31st we took part in the virtual Emsworth Show, something I know Faith Ponsonby has worked incredibly hard to help set up. Sophie and I were both really impressed with the submissions from across the Borough and had to both chose our favourite entry's from the range of categories on display, our chosen winners were titled 'Three Edible Fruits' and 'Twin bunnies for Twin babies' that still appear on the website. We look forward to attending a potential Spring show early next year!

On the 3rd September I had the proud moment of being able to raise the Red Ensign to mark Merchant Navy Day, when we honour the brave men and women who kept our island nation afloat during both world wars and also recognise the efforts of modern day seafarers, who during the pandemic have ensured that we have the food, fuel, medicines and other essential goods we needed in the UK. Over 90% of our imports are transported to us by our Merchant Navy – we thank you.

The 9th September saw us hold a hybrid Council meeting. From my perspective it ran well especially when we had to accommodate in person discussions with those members joining virtually, in addition to public deputations being given. Again over 100 members of the public were watching, in addition to our internal platform, highlighting our accessibility and transparency as a Council.

Social media and our presence online has been a real success to date. We have created a Mayor of Havant Instagram page which has since the end of July gained almost 150 followers. Using my Cllr Prad Bains Facebook page as the main social media tool, in my 15 organic posts since being elected Mayor, we have reached 50,295 people (as of 10/09/20). Not only have we had a massive reach, we have had invites to events through social media and organisers have been able to use our profile to their benefit.

Looking forward in the short term, we have government guidance approved events filling the diary that include visits to the Donkey Sanctuary, PO9 Foodbank, my Mayor's Quiz Night, the Lord-Lieutenants Awards, Waterlooville Foodbank and visits to local schools. My idea of a Think Pink Week will also be taking place from September 14th to 18th and will see schools from across the Borough wearing an item of pink on a non-school uniform day to help support my Mayoral Appeal, raising funds for Hannah's Holiday Homes; my thanks go to the Portsmouth News again for promoting the work we are doing across the Borough.

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