



Havant
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mayor's Parlour
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant
Hampshire PO9 2AX

T 023 9247 4174
F 023 9248 0263
DX 50005 Havant

www.havant.gov.uk

Mayor's Report
Wednesday 27th January 2021

For a second occasion we find ourselves all in another lockdown and much like everyone else the Mayorality has had to adapt yet again in order for me to complete my responsibilities and duties successfully. I have had to think outside of the box, adapting to changing government guidelines and have been incredibly pro-active which has meant that we have been far more visible than any other authority. Through my Think Pink idea that saw 24 schools dress up in pink to help raise funds for my Mayoral charity Hannah's Holiday Home, we have helped raise awareness of the charity's work to thousands of children and their families and to date raised around £4,000 in total through my initiative. By personally reaching out to local businesses, charities, organisations and individuals, I have created much of what I outline below. Much of what I have been doing has been covered by the Portsmouth news with brilliant articles and write ups, as well as efforts being highlighted on BBC Radio multiple times.

My previous report took us to the 23rd September when before I took the Mayoress out for her birthday dinner, I chaired full council again in a hybrid format. Balancing the need to oversee a meeting in person, virtually on a chat box with members and also streaming out to public attendees can be a lot to manage, however I ensured that our council meeting was again another example of how we are embracing our motto and leading from the front, for others to follow. I am told that we are being used as a case study by other authorities of how to conduct hybrid meetings successfully, a testament to all the officers involved. James Harris and his team deserve a particular mention here, without their efforts and continued patience, we would not have had the compliments and admiration we now have for the way we conduct our meetings.

With the usual fundraising for my Mayoral charity being curtailed by the pandemic, I took a positive from the past few months and used technology to our advantage, hosting the first ever virtual Mayor's quiz night on the 24th September. I was joined by the Mayor and Consort of Gosport, Alan Mak MP, Havant Rotary and by fellow members where we not only had a good evening, but raised vital funds for Hannah's Holiday Home as well, thank you again to all that took part in the evening.

The day after I joined the team at Waterloofood bank, helping to get parcels ready for those that need them most. The operation in my ward is run by the most wonderful volunteers who truly go above and beyond to ensure everyone has access to food and other essential items. I had first-hand experience during the lockdown of running Waterloofood's Helping Hands, working very closely with Debbie and her team to support the most vulnerable in our community and to see in person the work they do was truly inspiring. I was so pleased to hear that on top of amazing public donations, local supermarkets such as Morrison's, Lidl, Sainsbury's, Asda, Tesco and M&S all contribute stock to help support the food bank. Thank you to all the volunteers and contributors that enable everyone in our community to have access to the things they need most.

On September 28th I visited Grainger who took the time to show me the progress being made on the Berewood site in Waterloofood. By working with developers such as Redrow Homes, Bloor Homes, Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes, Grainger have ensured that 40% of the homes at Berewood are affordable housing, meaning more of our younger families and professionals can take

that first step onto the property ladder. I was also impressed with the emphasis on the environment and nature and the steps being put in place to ensure that the site is a sustainable one.

On Thursday 1st October I joined the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire virtually for his awards evening for SERFCA. As with all other virtual events, it brings many positives in the form of a wider audience, better accessibility and cost saving. The Lord Lieutenant and I were once again at an event together on October 4th at Portsmouth Cathedral, where I took part in the Seafarers service. I laid a wreath on behalf of all the citizens from our Borough and commemorated the sacrifice and service of all Seafarers from the Royal Navy, Merchant Navy and all other fishing fleets. Not only did Seafarers keep our nation afloat during both World Wars, but modern-day Seafarers have ensured throughout this pandemic, that we are still able to access the vital fuel, food and medicines we so needed. Over 90% of the UK's imports come via our seas. It was lovely to be joined at this service to recognise the efforts of our Seafarers by Her Excellency, Ms Nomatamba Tambo, South African High Commissioner to the UK, the Lord Lieutenant of Hampshire, Lord Mayor of Portsmouth, fellow harbour Mayors, Naval Base Commander of Portsmouth, Chaplain of the Fleet and the city's MP's. It was a great compliment to me that I also received such positive comments and praise about the work I am doing across the Borough during the pandemic from fellow Mayors who had been keeping track of my movements via social media, the newspapers and the radio. After the service I also tuned in virtually to Winchester's Harvest festival from the Cathedral.

On Monday 5th October, following on from my Think Pink visit to Purbrook Infant School, they kindly invited me back on what was world teachers day and gave me the honour of opening the school's brand new library that has been funded through their amazing parent/teacher association. I know first-hand how incredibly pro-active the school are and have seen how they go the extra mile for all of their pupils, the school are a huge credit to our Borough. The children were so excited to have a brand-new library in their school and to have the chance to listen to the impact this had on them was inspiring. I spent time reading to the children and was given a first-class tour by the pupils themselves. It has taken years of planning, fundraising and hard work to get to the opening and along with the staff and pupils at the school, I would like to extend an enormous thanks to all those who have contributed towards the project and in turn enabled pupils to have a wonderful place to develop their reading skills. My thanks to the Portsmouth News for covering this with a main article, I know that meant a lot to the school.

On the 6th October I visited Right at Home in Havant where I learnt more about the fabulous home care they provide to residents across our area. Over 80 carers have throughout the lockdown ensured that all those who crucially needed care support were able to access it. Duncan's team really do go that extra mile for all their clients and it was a pleasure to be able to meet some of them today, where I also drew a raffle that has raised over £150 for my Mayoral charity, Hannah's Holiday Home – Thank you!

It was such a privilege on the 9th October to have been given the opportunity to open Havant & Waterlooville FC's brand-new pitch, along with their new stadium name the Draper Tools Community Stadium. I've been going to watch the Hawks play since I was a little boy and to see how the club have now become such a social hub for the community is amazing. As well as being an elite club, the facilities now mean that teams from all ages and demographics are able to use the stadium seven days a week, all year round. The new pitch installed by S&C Slatter is state of the art and it's such a proud moment for our Borough that this community stadium is now open and more accessible than ever. I also had great pride in presenting the Chairman Derek Pope with our crest of arms to mark the occasion. Thanks again to Portsmouth News for covering this widely.

The following day on world mental health day, I met with Ross from HEH Mind to hear more about their children's crisis line and their young people's safe haven. I'm really pleased to hear that HCC are funding Mind to deliver training on mental health awareness, suicide prevention and how to talk about mental health through their connect 5 programme. As a charity Mind's information was accessed 16 million times this year, their helplines responded to over 118,000 people and over

775,000 employees were reached through their well-being in the workplace initiatives. I promoted Mind's do one thing project and ensured that I gave all the relevant information about the charity and how to contact them when posting online.

On Sunday 11th, I once again virtually attended the Law Matins service from Winchester Cathedral and supported the efforts of the High Sherriff to keep Her Majesty the Queen's peace across Hampshire. On the 13th I was lucky enough to be invited back after my Think Pink Week to join Mill Rythe Infant School's School Council meeting, where the year R, 1 & 2 children got to ask me some excellent questions about our local area, my role as the Mayor, the environment and education. I was very impressed with their questioning skills, knowledge and enthusiasm! I also gave pupils their very own Mayor's badges to take home. I look forward to coming back to the school again very soon, thank you for having me.

The following day I met with the team at Barratt Homes who took me on a tour of their site in Waterlooville, where they are delivering over 300 homes for local families, a staggering 40% of which is affordable housing meaning many more younger people and families can take their first step onto the property ladder. I was incredibly impressed with the covid measures put in place by the team, ensuring everyone on site is safe at all times. The extraordinary level of detail given to each house from start to finish was clear to see, meaning that those moving into the new homes would be as impressed as I was today.

I am very proud that Havant has been recognised as the happiest place to live in Hampshire. The ONS survey only reinforced what I already knew – Having always lived, been educated and worked in our Borough, I know first-hand why it's such an amazing place to live. We are surrounded by the strongest of communities and to have the privilege of being the Borough's first citizen, is something that I am incredibly proud of and very happy about!

On Saturday 24th October, I was given the honour for the second year running of launching this year's Poppy Appeal in Havant. It's is more important than ever that this year we remember the sacrifice and service of our Armed Forces that has given us the freedoms we enjoy and enabled our way of life to continue as we know it. My Mayor's message –

The act of Remembrance is one of the most powerful things we can all do to commemorate the sacrifice and service of all the British, Commonwealth and Allied servicemen and women during the First World War, Second World War and all other conflicts through to the present day. We owe our freedom and our way of life to all those personnel that have served in and beside our Armed Forces.

This year also marks the 75th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Britain in 1940 and victory in the skies above us, where never had so much been owed by so many to so few. I would also like to pay tribute to Dame Vera Lynn who will forever remain our Forces and nations sweetheart. Although at this moment we may be restricted by government guidelines, I believe it is more important than ever that contribute to this year's Poppy Appeal and that we mark this Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day at 11am with a two minute silence from the comfort and safety of our own homes, paying respect to all those that have enabled us to be here today.

On the 25th October, after hearing about the decision on free school meals, I myself contacted local businesses, restaurants and cafes, compiling a list of 17 amazing places across our Borough that were offering free meals for children during the half term week. No child deserves to go hungry this half term and I stand firmly beside every place offering support to families and children with food supplies throughout this week. It's essential that every child no matter their circumstances, has access to food. This half term incredible places across our Borough have stepped up to support anyone that needs access to food and free meals. I made a personal commitment that anyone who contacted me directly for support would indeed get the support they needed, and I am proud to have

fulfilled my commitment to our residents. The list of places available to help support families and their children that I compiled was shared 385 times and reached 48,012 people on social media.

On Tuesday the 27th Sophie and I helped re-open the Cowplain Day Nursery, a family run setting that has provided a lifeline during the lockdown for local families. Having gone to Padnell Infants and Juniors next door and living just up the road, I know what the nursery means to the community and how much of an incredible job Sandra and her team do to support young children locally. We spent time talking and listening to the staff and children, answering their questions and also presented the nursery with a Borough pennant to add to their art gallery. In the afternoon Sophie and I both visited the fabulous Stoke Fruit Farm, which has very quickly become one of our Borough's most popular places and it's no surprise why! From endless sunflower fields in the summer to 100,000 pumpkins being picked this October, it's a very special place to come and see. On our tour of the farm, Sam and Nette taught us about the different produce that the farm creates, most of which can also be bought in the farm shop which is stocked full of the farm's own and other local produce – it's well worth checking out! The farm is this year also offering a pumpkin recycling scheme where after use pumpkins can be returned to be composted and used back on the land. By doing this we could all do our bit to promote sustainability, recycling, waste reduction and of course this helps our environment!

On the 28th October, Sophie and I joined the Final Straw Foundation for a beach clean at Ferry Point. I was genuinely shocked to see the amount of micro-plastics that were scattered across every part of the beach. We've all seen Sir David Attenborough's new Netflix film, changing what we do at a local level is the way to start making a difference to nature and our environment. By 2050 there will be more plastic in our seas than fish, it's time to address this issue starting at a local level. Top tips from the Final Straw: only flush what you're meant to down the loo, cut down on single use cups and bottles and get yourself a reusable one, recycle properly and put the right stuff in the right bin, reduce, recycle, reuse. We can all make these slight changes, next time you visit the beach look a little closer to the ground at the rainbow of colours surrounding your feet, it's not natural it's plastic. That's only what's come out of our seas, not what's left in it – let's not add to the problem, let's try and change it. Congratulations also to the Final Straw on becoming a registered charity, I full support the work you are doing across our Borough and I look forward to our next beach clean. Straight from the beach we returned to the warmth of the parlour and got photos taken and quotes written for our next serving you, along with our Christmas photo!

On a very different Halloween to most years, we were all deeply saddened by the loss of Sir Sean Connery and my thoughts are with his friends and family. Sean was THE James Bond and growing up I idolized him as a role model and will continue to do so.

With the lockdown announced for the Thursday ahead, on Tuesday 3rd November I recorded my wreath laying and reading for the Holocaust Memorial Day which will be published on 27th January. My reading, Protest, by Zofia Kossak-Szczucka is incredibly striking and we should in January ensure we mark this incredibly important Memorial Day. I also took this opportunity to film a short clip for our Council's Can initiative, my thanks to Cllr Rennie for organising this on the day.

The day before lockdown I knew I needed to get as much done as I possibly could, this began with me having the honour of welcoming the Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire, Major-General James Balfour and former Chief of Defence Staff and head of our Armed Forces, General the Lord Richards, to St Faith's Church. We all took part in the pre-recorded service and ensured we laid wreaths, read aloud the names of the Sons of Havant we have lost in conflict, heard the Last Post played brilliantly and statements were also given that formed part of Canon Kennar's brilliant Sunday Service. Lord Richards and I also took the opportunity to record a separate clip getting across the importance of the act of Remembrance and why despite current restrictions, it's more important than ever that we remember this year. It's vital that we commemorate the service and sacrifice of our Armed Forces which has ensured our freedom and that our way of life continues as we know it. Even though another lockdown is upon us, General Richards and I are both incredibly

determined to see Remembrance this year marked as it rightfully should be. It was inspiring to hear the former Chief of Defence Staff speaking about his experiences and why we should all mark Remembrance this year, my thanks go to Lord Richards for his contribution. This clip along with my statement on behalf of the Borough were posted onto social media in the lead up to Remembrance, encouraging everyone to fall silent at 11am.

Thursday 5th November was bonfire night, where we celebrated 415 years of British tradition dating back to 1605 in a very different way. I teamed up with the advice from Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service and urged all to think twice about having firework displays at home, but if done planned carefully following the firework code. Having served as part of the incredible team of Firefighters at Station 19 Waterlooville, I know first-hand the importance of fire safety. It's crucial that we all do all we can to protect not only ourselves and our families, but also our emergency services who have been by our side continuously. Throughout this pandemic our Fire Service, Police and Ambulance services have been inspirational in their dedication to our safety. Let's do our bit and protect them this evening, as they do us every day.

The 6th November was a very special day for Hilda McElwee who celebrated her 100th birthday! I ensured that I dropped a gift and letter from me to her prior to the lockdown and also filmed a clip on her birthday that I sent across to her family to play on the day. What an incredible achievement to be able to celebrate your 100th birthday. I wished Hilda the very best for her special day and although so much has changed over the past century, it's people like Hilda that have been a constant and I very much look forward to the years ahead with her.

On this Remembrance Sunday we have all come together in a unique way from our own homes to commemorate the service and sacrifice of all British, Commonwealth and Allied servicemen and women that have fought to protect our way of life and our freedoms. In Havant the bells of St Faith's Church rang 161 times for each son of Havant that has been lost in war and that we remember especially, today. I was joined prior to the lockdown by the former Chief of Defence Staff and head of our Armed Forces, General the Lord Richards and by Her Majesty's Deputy Lieutenant of Hampshire, Major General James Balfour to complete Havant's service ready to be shown to all at home today. It is 100 years since the funeral of the unknown soldier and the unveiling of London's Cenotaph. In Havant our memorial was unveiled 98 years ago through public subscription. The fundraising was spearheaded by Mrs Leng, wife of the chairman of the Council at the time, Mr Frederick Leng. Mr and Mrs Leng had lost their son, Private Harold Leng who served under the Hampshire Regiment at Ypres and was killed in action in September 1918. Along with the help of the Rector at St Faith's, Mrs Leng went house to house across Havant for seven years collecting the £435 needed for the building of our memorial. Next time you visit Havant, please do take a moment to absorb the history and meaning of our war memorial. A special thanks must go to my Mayoral Chaplain, Canon Tom Kennar for his devotion to Remembrance, ensuring we are all able to mark today from wherever we may be. If you want to take another look at the service, it is available at on St Faith's Facebook page and also on St Wilfrid's Cowplain's page. My thanks must also go to Ian Snares for his tremendous effort in creating an excellent online service. Our focus now turns to Armistice Day, where once again we should all fall silent at 11am to remember those that gave their tomorrow, for our today. Lest we forget.

On Monday 9th November I was delighted to join the Havant Men's Shed to chat about the work they have been doing in the community and to hear their plans for the future post lockdown. I have met the team on many occasions and have seen their drive, enthusiasm and camaraderie first-hand. The shed is a place where all can go to share tools, skills, projects and of course coffee! It's a wonderful place for likeminded people to meet and really does act as a social hub for the community. If you or someone you know would be interested in joining them please do get in touch with the team, they are fab!

11/11 - Armistice day. 102 years ago, at 11am on the 11th November, the guns of the Western Front fell silent and it marked the end of over four years of the Great War. Today we think especially

of the 161 sons of Havant who fought and gave their lives in the First World War, Second World War and all other conflicts through to the present day. We commemorate their sacrifice and remember that it is only because of their selflessness that we are able to stand here today. We stand alongside our Allied neighbours on this day and it is our duty to ensure that the service and sacrifice of those that gave their tomorrow for our today is never forgotten. The formal ending of the First World War was signed in 1919 at Chateau de Versailles, in the hall of mirrors. This document that concluded the Great War was signed on parchment made in Havant - from a global scale to a local one, our common goal is simply to remember those who have given their lives, for us to live on. A wreath from me as Mayor and in turn on behalf of the 130,000 citizens of the Borough can be found at the memorials in Havant, Emsworth and Hayling. Lest we forget, we will remember them.

On Friday 13th November I had the privilege of returning to my old schools at Padnell Infants and Padnell Juniors, virtually. I joined the Juniors for their school assembly with my own Year 6 teacher Mrs Bloy to celebrate the weeks achievements. I then met with all three Year 2 classes at the Infant school where they asked me some brilliant questions about my role as the Mayor. It was humbling to be back albeit virtually, in the same classrooms I had worked in as a child growing up. Both schools also took part today in my Think Pink initiative, joining the other 22 local schools that have taken part to help raise vital awareness and funds for my Mayoral Charity Hannah's Holiday Home, by wearing something pink into school. Both schools helped raise £619.14 today for the charity, how incredible! It's even more poignant as Hannah attended both Padnell schools as a child, a memorial to her still stands proud in the school grounds.

Both schools looked fabulous in pink today and I even found a couple of old photos of me in both school uniforms, that you can find on social media and for anyone wondering, yes, my mother did cut my hair!

On Saturday 14th, I wished all a very Happy Diwali. Every year me and my family join the billions of other people across the globe to celebrate the Festival of Lights, which tells the story of when Lord Rama returned to his kingdom with his wife Sita after defeating Ravana and having served 14 years in exile. Diwali means so much to so many, from fireworks, family feasts and the exchange of gifts through to the diyas that light up every corner of a family home, it's a special time of year for all. My best wishes go to my friends at the Havant Hindu temple, that I had the privilege to help re-open last year.

In the short term diary moving forward, I look forward very much to attending Hart Plain Infant school's assembly during their Black Lives Matter week, to talk about my experiences coming from a diverse background and being the youngest Mayor ever elected in the UK of ethnic minority. I am also due to virtually open a new nursery and chair full council. I will of course continue to think outside the box with fundraising and event planning, continuing to engage with businesses, charities and organisations personally, leading from the front.

The vast majority of invitations have continued to come in via social media, enabling Sophie and I to continue our civic duties across the Borough, engaging with and using to our advantage, the virtual world we are surrounded by. I am pleased to say the Instagram page is growing day by day which is being used alongside my main social media tool, my Cllr Prad Bains Facebook page.

Since being elected as Mayor on July 22nd, I'm incredibly proud to say that my organic posts have now reached 231,177 people. Nearly a quarter of a million times my initiatives and ventures across the Borough have appeared on people's screens in just the last three months, Havant is truly being put back on the map.

Thank you.

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