

3Rd Mayors Report for Full Council 28th January 2019

Fellow Councillors, another busy two and half months since last full council in which I have completed 52 engagements.

Obviously, there are too many to talk about, but I would like to highlight a few from the end of 2018

Events at the Corn Exchange have included handing over the Ceremonial trowel used for laying the foundations back in 1863, a trip to the Pantomime to see Jack and the Beanstalk (oh no you didn't oh yes, I did!)

Marking the 100th anniversary of the end of WW1 saw several events including War poetry at Trinity School and War Words by friends of Newtown Cemetery, the latter being accompanied by the sound of fireworks at Newbury Racecourse which added a certain poignancy to words spoken about the sounds of the battle field.

Our own event to mark Remembrance Day was incredibly moving as it was amazing to see over 6,000 people attended the commemoration. Mention must also to go to the 'Battle's Over' event which was also well attended and much appreciated as a way of acknowledging those who gave their lives from Newbury during the 4 years of WW1. Our final World Wars exhibition and talks also took place over the week of the 9th November onwards. Thanks to the World Wars Working group for all the amazing work they have done over the past 5 years.

I enjoyed spending time at the World Food day held at The Riverside Community Centre in November which led to me being invited to visit the West Berkshire Muslim Centre for a coffee morning, another fun and interesting event.

Another fun event was celebrating the New Era Players 40th anniversary by attending a performance of 'The Heiress' The first play they performed back in the 1960's.

Where to start for Christmas 2018!

Switching on the Christmas lights in November got everything off with a burst of colour and a packed Market Place. The tree and the lights looked magnificent.

I attended 6 Carol services including our own successful Civic Carol Concert at St John's the Evangelist Newbury. Thanks go to all Councillors who supported that event.

The most memorable Carol Concert must be the one held on the 20th December at St Mary's Shaw for Guide dogs for the Blind, there were working dogs retired dogs and puppies in training at the service and they raised over £600!

I had the fun of several Christmas parties held for various organisations in the weeks leading up to Christmas and enjoyed a delightful Christmas lunch at the Fair Close Day centre.

Packing parcels and then delivering parcels for the NWN over 80's parcel fund was great fun, a well organised massive event with over 1000 parcels delivered in the area.

A special delight for me was taking Evie my Granddaughter on the Santa Barge Trip She was awestruck by her first ever meeting with Father Christmas and then competed with the Town Crier to see who could ring the bell loudest.

On Christmas Day morning I spent a couple of hours with the Mayor of Thatcham meeting and spending time with patients on Highclere and Donnington Wards at West Berkshire Community Hospital, It was lovely to see how the staff had made such an effort for those in hospital away from their families on this special day and the warmth and smiles from the nursing staff to all in their care was a joy along with joining in the carols from the Salvation Army .

On New Year's Eve John and I spent the hour before midnight witnessing the ringing out of the Old Year and then the ringing in of the New in the Bell Tower of St Nicolas Church. I was joined by my Chaplin The Rev Debbie Davidson who said a prayer for the Town as the New Year commenced. I have been very grateful for her support at several events over the past months.

As 2019 has commenced there has been little let up in my engagements, already I have welcomed a former Mayor back to Newbury on a visit from his now home of New Zealand, Attended and opened the Volunteer event at the Corn Exchange talking to over 60 charities, attended a Coffee morning in support of Sue Ryder and opened the County Conference for the Royal British

Legion speaking on how the RBL is as relevant today as it was 98 years ago when it was formed.

I am looking forward to my charity event on 16th February which I hope some of you will attend and also to representing Newbury at the formal twinning with Carcaixent in March.

My thanks as always to all the Council Officers, to Cllr Kuldip Singh Kang and to all Councillors in their assistance in many ways.

Cllr Margo Payne

Mayor of Newbury