

Mayor's Report for Atherstone Town Council Meeting, September 2024

Civic Service at St. Mary's Church, Warwick, Sunday July 28th

The Mayor of Warwick, Councillor Dave Skinner, invited the Mayor and Consort of Atherstone to attend a Civic Service which celebrated the culmination of the Folk Festival which had been taking place in Warwick during the week. Invited guests were asked to assemble at The Courthouse on Jury Street, from where there was a procession to the Church. The procession, led by Warwick Council's Mace Bearer in his splendid attire, consisted of The Mayor and his Consort, Warwick Councillors, former Mayors of Warwick and current Mayors or Deputies from around Warwickshire and across the Midlands.

The service was led by the recently installed Reverend Canon Angus Aagaard, who surprised and delighted the congregation by a demonstration of stilt walking! Contributions to the joyful service included poetry, music and dancing, which came from folk musicians, clog dancers and members of the congregation and the Sunday School.

At the end of the service a troupe of Morris Dancers were awaiting the exit of the Mayoral party from the Church so that they could escort us to the gardens at the rear of The Courthouse, where refreshments were served. We were further entertained by groups of Morris dancers, including the Earlsdon Morris Dancers from Coventry who must have one of the youngest Morris dancers I have ever seen. They looked very colourful in their elaborate floral headdresses and Morris costumes. To add to the amusement of the occasion one of their Morris team was dressed as a black horse, who very mischievously stalked and surprised a number of the spectators.

Many thanks to the Mayor of Warwick for his generous hospitality in such an historic setting on a beautiful, sunny, Summer's afternoon.

Charity Race Night, Alcester Civic Event Tuesday, August 13th

This event took place at the Greig Hall in Alcester at the invitation of The Mayor of Alcester, Councillor Mike Bowe and his Consort, wife Sue, to raise funds for his chosen charity The Crafty Lunch Club. This charity provides opportunities for social engagement and a range of stimulating activities that would not otherwise be accessible for some members of the community, due to their mobility, health, or special needs issues. Many of the Club's members and volunteers, their families and friends were in attendance as well as Civic guests for this fund-raising and fun-filled evening of horse racing. The races were shown on screen and punters were invited to place their bets. In addition to the betting we were told that we could pay to have the privilege of being a "jockey" of any of the horses. For those who chose to do this, special jockey caps were provided with the promise that should they be a winner they would also win a prize of wine and chocolates. I can now claim to have been a horse-racing jockey on a number of occasions, but not unfortunately one that has won a race. Despite cheering on our chosen horses "Lady Luck" was not kind to us, but we were pleased that 50% of all the proceeds from the evening would go to the Charity as well as paying out on all winning bets.

It was a very enjoyable evening for all those who attended and which raised money for a very worthwhile cause.

Atherstone Hockey Club, New Season Launch at TQEA, Atherstone Saturday, September 7th

I was very pleased to be invited to meet members of the Atherstone Adders Hockey Club and to see the younger members being trained and put through their paces by the Club's own Coaches and Young Leaders. It was very encouraging to see so many youngsters getting involved in the sport and having the opportunity to engage in a sporting, social activity, with the support of their parents, families and friends, who were in attendance to encourage them.

It was very interesting to hear from senior members of the Club about the development of young players both in terms of sporting achievement and the social confidence which playing hockey provides. The Club has a very highly-respected profile in the local community and is keen to encourage local schools and its pupils to get involved in the sport. Having been a hockey player myself, I was very impressed to see how much the children enjoyed themselves, even the under-5s. At such a young age there was some very skilful ball-control on display. It was very pleasing to hear how junior players progress through the Club, learning the game, training to coach younger players, and some going on to train and qualify as umpires. There are a significant number of players who having gone away to college or university return to the club after completing their courses.

I would like to thank the Club for inviting me to see what a valuable contribution it is making and has made over many years to the health and well-being of our local community and the respect it has earned as a sporting organisation, raising the profile of Atherstone, both locally and in the wider community.

Atherstone Car Show, Sunday, September 8th

What a fantastic event this was. Many thanks and congratulations to the Atherstone Car Show Committee, its many volunteers, sponsors and supporters for putting on this wonderful annual event. I was very proud and privileged as Mayor to be invited, together with my Consort, husband Alan, to open this year's show. Having been picked up outside The Red Lion Hotel in Long Street by an American Fire Chief's SUV, we were escorted, together with a motorcade of American Police cars and Emergency vehicles, with accompanying sirens and flashing beacons, by "Mr. Bean" in his Mini, to The Market Square. We were welcomed by the Treasurer of The Motor Show Committee, former Mayor of the town, Mark "Jodda" Jordan, and formally invited to open the show. Despite the early downpour of rain there were plenty of spectators and exhibitors present to see us welcome our guest celebrity, "Mr. Bean", (a very convincing version of the famous Rowan Atkinson character) together with his own classic vehicle. After the formalities, we had the opportunity to look around at the fantastic display of vehicles, chat to owners, exhibitors and visitors, as well as pose for photos with some of the support services in attendance. As soon as the rain stopped and the sun appeared, the crowds were flocking into town to see the array of vehicles; classic and vintage cars, motorcycles and scooters, campervans, farm and utility vehicles etc on display. There were colouring competitions for the children and a very well-sponsored raffle with a host of motor-related prizes. Many thanks to those businesses who kindly donated so generously.

I'm sure everyone who attended will have had a thoroughly enjoyable experience. As Mayor, I am pleased that the Town Council is able to contribute to support this free, family-friendly, annual event in the town which attracts and welcomes visitors from far and wide.