

Councillor Sara Bishop- Mayor's Report for ATC Meeting 25.7.2024

Friday June 21st

TQEA Y10, Graduation Ceremony

I and my Consort, husband Alan, were invited by Neil Harding, The Principal of The Queen Elizabeth Academy, to attend a special Graduation and Awards Ceremony for Year 10 students. This event was the first of its kind and was not only a celebration of students' achievements, academic, artistic, sporting and pastoral, but also an opportunity to encourage and motivate the students as they enter their final year at the Academy. I was pleased to be amongst a number of others, including Mrs. Ann Webb, Chair of Governors and Mr. Hugh Nethercot, Chair of The Queen Elizabeth Charity Trust, presenting certificates and prizes. It was very pleasing to see that so many parents and carers were able to be in attendance to support their young people. After the event, all of the Year 10 students and parents, carers and guests were invited to take refreshments in the dining area. There were opportunities for the students to have special photos taken wearing graduation gowns and mortar boards as well as some fun sunglasses. It was clear to see that students took full advantage of this opportunity to capture this momentous occasion in their school career. Congratulations to all the students as they move forward into Year 11 to face the challenges that the next 12 months will bring. Thank you to Neil and all staff at the Academy for all the hard work involved in putting on this wonderful event.

Sunday June 23rd

Paddle-Ability Event at Ruby's Yard, Atherstone

The weather was very kind for this Paddle-Ability event at Ruby's Yard in Atherstone. The sunshine was glorious and the location next to The Coventry Canal that runs through the town was the perfect place for people of all ages and abilities to experience the delights of the canal and try some water sports including, paddle boarding and kayaking. The Torrington Foundation provided a small grant to enable the event to take place and Omega Outdoor Adventures from Tamworth, together with their instructors and volunteers, enabled groups of enthusiastic visitors to get out on the water throughout the day. We were able to talk to a number of volunteers who have been involved in plans to establish a Paddling Club at Ruby's Yard. The event was well attended and it was great to see the fun and enjoyment that participants experienced. To add to the proceeding PCSO Gavin Scott came along in his Police van to engage with children and adults from the community. He was very popular, especially when he opened up the back of the van and allowed people to see and pose for photos. Thank you to Jacky for inviting us to the Paddle-Ability event and I hope that there will be plenty of volunteer support to get the Paddle Club established.

Thursday June 27th

Outwoods School, Carnival on the Market Square

Together with the Consort, I was very pleased to welcome the children and staff of Outwoods School to the Market Square on the school's "Carnival Day". The Square was full of families and friends who had come to hear the children sing and to see them dressed in their colourful Carnival outfits and headwear. There were some spectacular outfits to be seen and the children had made colourful hats of all sorts of designs to match the Carnival theme. The children's behaviour was impeccable and their enthusiastic singing and dancing really put the audience in the party mood. I wasn't the only one singing along with the children. The weather was warm and sunny which was a bonus. Thank you to everyone who involved in the event and those who came to support it, including PCSO Gavin Scott and NWBC Councillor Rachel Taylor. Thanks also to Town Councillor Carol Evans who negotiated very ably for the loan of some of the safety barriers for the children's performance area and kindly provided chairs for the Consort and me, as well as much-appreciated bottles of cold water. It was a really lovely afternoon.

Sunday June 30th

Civic Service at St. Alphege Church, Solihull

The Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Shahin Ashraf MBE, invited us to St. Alphege Parish Church in Solihull for Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council's Civic Service. The service marked some significant anniversaries in the Council's history- 70 years of the Mayoralty, 60 years since Solihull became a County Borough and 50 years since becoming a Metropolitan Borough. There were many Civic Leaders from across Warwickshire and the West Midlands present amongst the congregation. There were also a number of faith leaders from Solihull Faith Forum reflecting the ethnic diversity of the local community. The theme of the sermon, delivered by the Mayor's Chaplain, Revd. Paul Day, was Unity and to symbolise this candles were lit by the Mayor, the Minister Revd Nick Parker, and a number of invited guests including the Lord-Lieutenant of the West Midlands Sir John Crabtree OBE. The service also celebrated the Commissioning of Solihull's Mayor and Councillors who pledged to seek to work in such a way that everyone in the Borough of Solihull has an opportunity to be healthier, happier, safer and to flourish- certainly sentiments that we would all share for our own community. At the end of the service we were welcomed to the Civic Suite for light refreshments.

Tuesday July 16th

TQEA Year 7 Celebration Ceremony

It was an early start this morning to arrive at 8.45 at TQEA for the Year 7 Celebration Ceremony. After signing in we made our way to the Hall to be seated. Before the ceremony got underway we were entertained by the wonderful musical performance on piano by George Cardall from Year 11. We were welcomed warmly by the Principal of the Academy, Neil Harding. It was very pleasing to hear that students in Year 7 were well above the current national percentage for attendance and were also the best in terms of attendance out of all of the Year Groups in the Academy. Mr. Harding praised the students and thanked all the parents and carers who had made time to come and celebrate the achievements of their children. Awards were made for both progress and endeavour in all curriculum subjects and were presented by Mrs. Morris, Deputy Principal and Ms. Ressel, Assistant Principal. Tutor Awards were then presented to each of the selected pupils from each of the tutor groups by Ms. Parsons, Head of Year. These Awards were focussed on the 4 key principles of the Academy; Pride, Resilience, Endeavour and Kindness. Mrs. Selby P.A. to the Principal was on hand to take photos of the Award winners under the balloon arch in the hall. The exceptional behaviour of students was recognised by the awarding of certificates and the outstanding attendance within each Tutor Group was also recognised. I was very pleased to be invited to present certificates and trophies to students who had been chosen by The Head of Year, Ms. Parsons. Awards were also presented on behalf of the Queen Elizabeth Charity Trust to recognise their contributions to the Community. Mrs. Ann Webb, Chair of the Local Governing Board presented the TQEA Personal Progress Award. Finally Ms. Parsons presented a certificate and Trophy to the Tutor Group of the Year 7JYS. Ms. Parsons spoke about how proud she was of how Year 7 students who had made the transition from Primary School to Year 7, praising their attitude and achievements and saying that they would be role models for the new Year 7 in September. As a reward for all the pupils' hard work over the year an ice cream van was in the playground ready to provide them each with an icecream. It was a pity the weather was rather wet, but it didn't dampen the enthusiasm of those waiting in the queue for their ice creams. Congratulations to all students and staff of Year 7.

Wednesday July 17th

TQEA Year 8 Celebration Ceremony

Once again we were up early to go to TQEA for the Year 8's Celebration Ceremony. As at the beginning of yesterday's Year 7 event, the audience of invited guests, students, parents and carers were entertained by piano music played by George Cardall from Year 11. In addition, Daniel Smith from Year 9 played the piano beautifully, the musical talent on display was very impressive. Principal, Mr. Neil Harding welcomed the invited guests and

parents and carers to the event, emphasising how important their support is to the students to enable them to achieve and that the Academy appreciated their continued support. The Curriculum Awards were presented by Mrs. Morris, Deputy Principal recognising progress and endeavour on the part of students in the sciences, English Language and Literature as well as humanities and the creative arts. In addition, pupils who had undertaken external swimming courses were presented with certificates, with badges to be given later. The Exceptional Behaviour Awards were awarded and students were invited to stand to receive the applause of all the guests and the teaching and support staff of the Academy. Mrs. Selby P.A. to the Principal was on duty throughout the ceremony taking photos of award winners under the balloon arch. Outstanding Attendance Awards were given to students, from each of the Tutor Groups. I was very pleased to be invited to present the certificates and trophies to winners of the Head of Year Award. The Queen Elizabeth Charity Community Award was presented by Mrs Morris on behalf of Mr. Hugh Nethercot, Chair of the Charity, which has sponsored each of the Year Group Celebration Evnts. Mrs. Anne Webb, then presented the TQEA Personal Progress Award. Mrs. Ealing, Head of Year presented the Tutor Group of the Year Award to 8SRT, Mr. Telfer received the Award on their behalf. Mrs. Ealing, Head of Year, then addressed the students thanking them for all the effort they had made to overcome challenges during the year and saying how proud she was of all they had achieved so far since joining the Academy in Year 7. Mrs. Webb, Chair of the Governing Body, thanked all the staff and students for all their work during the year. Fortunately for the students of Year 8 they were then able to go outside in the sunshine to receive their promised ice creams. Parents, carers and other guests were invited to the Canteen for refreshments. Thank you to all at TQEA who have made these events possible.

St. Giles Hospice Coffee Morning at Chapel House, Atherstone

This was the second event of the day for my Consort, Alan and myself. I was very pleased to have been invited by Chapel House's Siobhan Napper to support this fund-raising event for the work of St. Giles Hospice. This was their 20th year of hosting the event and in recognition of this Alison from St. Giles HQ presented Siobhan with a beautiful bouquet as well as a Certificate from St. Giles in recognition of all her voluntary work. Alison described the work of St. Giles telling us that St. Giles does not just provide Hospice care and that 80% of their work is out in the community, supporting people in their own homes. She went on to tell us that whilst the government support had reduced from 30% to 20% the running costs of the charity had risen from £10,000,000 to £13,000,000. All fund-raising events like this are very much appreciated by the charity.

The beautiful garden was full of people enjoying the sunshine and the tea, coffee and cakes that were on offer. The Atherstone Friends of St. Giles were working hard running a tombola, selling raffle tickets, books and of course delicious cakes. There was also a Guess the Name of the Bear; our guesses didn't win us the bear but we were lucky with some of the raffle tickets we bought.

Inside Chapel House itself there was a fascinating display of dolls' houses and Richard Napper was happy to tell us about the work that had gone in to creating the elaborate scale models complete with hand crafted furniture created in exquisite detail.

I was very pleased to deliver a vote of thanks to Siobhan and Richard of Chapel House, Alison from St. Giles and all the volunteers from the Atherstone Friends of St. Giles. I hope that the event helped to raise money for such a worthy charity. Thank you to the people of Atherstone for supporting this fund-raising event.

Thursday July 17th TQEA Year 9 Celebration Ceremony

This afternoon my Consort, Alan, and I were pleased to attend the end of year Celebration Ceremony for Year 9 students. It was very pleasing to see that there were lots of parents, families and carers that had come along to take part in the celebration, the youngest of which, a beautiful baby girl, I was reliably informed by Mum, was only 4 weeks old. The Celebration Ceremony was preceded by the beautiful piano playing of Daniel Smith from Year 9. Someone must have told him I was a John Legend fan because he included some of his music, as well as playing a wonderful Chopin piece. We were all welcomed warmly by Neil Harding Principal, who thanked us all for coming and supporting the students. When the award-giving got underway Mrs. Morris, Deputy Principal together with Mrs. Davies, Head of Year 9, presented the Curriculum Awards for Progress and Endeavour in

each subject. Tutor Awards were then presented by Mrs. Davies. The Exceptional Behaviour Awards followed and due to the sheer number of students who were being recognised for their outstanding behaviour, students were asked to stand in groups to receive the applause from fellow students, teaching staff, families, friends and guests. Tutor groups were then recognised for their attendance by receiving Outstanding Attendance Awards. I was called on to present two very special SSAT Silver Leadership awards and four Head of Year Awards. I was delighted to recognise that one of the recipients, Ollie Jones, was none other than the young man who had played Oliver Warbucks in TQEA's recent production of the musical show "Annie". The Queen Elizabeth Charity Community Award was then presented by Mrs. Morris on behalf of the Chair of the Charity Trust. Mrs. Amanda Duffield, from the Local Governing Body, then presented the TQEA Personal Progress Award. Finally the Tutor Group of the Year Award was presented to Tutor Group 9NMT. Mrs. Selby was on hand with the iPad throughout to take photos of all the Award winners, which could later be shared with family and friends. Having congratulated the whole of Year 9 Mrs. Davies went on to say that Year 9 had accumulated more than 30,000 points in recognition of their positive behaviour and that they had been role models for other Year Groups in Line-ups. She said that she was very proud of what they had achieved this year and emphasised that moving into Year 10, when they would be taking GCSE's would be very challenging but she was sure that if they observed the 4 key principles of the Academy and made sure their attendance was on track they had the potential to make good progress and achieve the grades needed to enable them to choose their future pathway in education and eventually into the workplace. The ice cream van awaited in the playground to supply the much-deserved reward of an ice cream treat.

It has been a real privilege this week to be part of the TQEA Celebration Ceremonies and to recognise the progress and achievements of all the young people who are receiving the best education in our local Atherstone Academy. Congratulations, too, to all the staff who work so hard to provide the best learning experiences possible for all the students. Thank you, too, to Neil Harding, Principal, for his dynamic leadership and also the Local Governing Body for all their support and last but not least The Queen Elizabeth Charity Trust who sponsored all of these Celebration Ceremonies. This was the first year that TQEA has held this type of end of year event and I think they have been outstanding in celebrating the achievements of all their students. Well done all. I hope you all have a wonderful summer break.

Saturday, July 20th. Civic Service, St. Nicholas Church, Alcester

My Consort and I attended The Civic Service at the invitation of The Mayor of Alcester, Councillor Mike Bowe and his Consort Mrs. Sue Bowe. The Service was led by the Reverend Katie Cross. During the Service, following the Commissioning of The Mayor of Alcester, there was a presentation by Beth Clarke about the Mayor's chosen charity, The Crafty Lunch Club, which is a voluntary group, set up with the help of a grant from the Alcester Town Council. The Crafty Lunch Club provides a weekly opportunity for individuals with a variety of needs and their carers to come together and enjoy a range of activities including singing, dancing and crafting. It has enabled them to build relationships and to take part in a weekly activity which they would previously have found difficult to access.

It was good to meet Mayors from many Parish, Town, Borough and County Councils from around the Midlands and to have conversations over a cup of tea and cake.

