

Mayor's Report for November Town Council Meeting 13.11.24

Wednesday, October 16th, Merevale and Gypsy Lane Allotment Awards,

At the opening of the October Town Council Meeting, I was called upon by Councillor Jones of the Allotment Judging Group to present the certificates and trophies to the winners of this year's awards. Councillor Jones commented on the challenging weather conditions this year and how it had affected working on the plots. Despite this there were some very successful outcomes. Although not everyone who won an award or received a commendation could be present for the presentation there was a very good turn out and plenty of photos were taken of the successful recipients. Prizes were awarded for the winner and runner-up for full plots and half-plots on each of the Merevale and Gypsy Lane sites, as well as commendations for allotment holders who narrowly missed out on the prizes. In addition, Best Newcomer Awards were given, although this year they were only awarded for the Gypsy Lane Allotment Site.

Prize winners at Merevale were Full Plot 1st prize S. Ford, 2nd prize M. Starkey

Half Plot 1st prize C. Lamond, 2nd prize G. Kiteley

Commendations were awarded to Plot Holders Andrews and Hiatt

Prize winners at Gypsy Lane were Full Plot 1st prize K. Lakin, 2nd prize, G. Hewitt

Half Plot 1st prize A. Bartlam, 2nd prize G. Gibson

Commendations were awarded to Plot Holders Takeh and Riley

Best Newcomer 1st prize K. Campos, 2nd prize R. Bruce.

Congratulations to all the hard-working plot holders for their efforts and achievements which were celebrated this evening.

Friday, October 18th Blyth Hall, Coleshill Civic Cheese and Wine Evening

We were very pleased to attend the charity fund-raising cheese and wine evening at Blyth Hall, Coleshill, as a result of the invitation from Sue Wallace, The Mayor of Coleshill. We were welcomed by Coleshill's Sergeant at Arms who showed us into the hall to meet The Mayor. It was a very well-attended event with over 140 guests. During the evening there was a very interesting talk by a local historian describing the historical background to the house and its surroundings. Blyth Hall is a Grade 1 listed 17th century country manor house, on the banks of the River Blythe, near to Shustoke. The estate has been in the Dugdale family since it was purchased by Sir William Dugdale in 1625. Guests were allowed to tour the house and explore at their leisure.

Saturday, October 19th, Atherstone Amateur Dramatic Society at OSCA, Atherstone

When we received the invitation from The Dramatic Society to attend a performance of their latest production, "The Thrill of Love", by Amanda Whittington, we were disappointed that

due to other commitments we were unable to attend on any of the performance nights. However, Trish Hall, Secretary of the Dramatic Society, very kindly allowed us to see the dress rehearsal on the preceding Saturday afternoon at OSCA.

The play tells the story of Ruth Ellis, the last woman in England to be hanged, for killing her abusive lover, David Blakeley, in 1955. The play itself was quite moving and even humorous at times. The cast gave some very powerful performances and we were thoroughly enthralled. After the performance ended we were pleased to be able to meet and congratulate the cast. We wished them a great run for the coming performances.

Atherstone is very fortunate to have such a group of talented performers who regularly put on productions at OSCA, which greatly enriches the cultural life of the town.

Tuesday, October 22nd, Virtual AGM of Warwickshire Young Carers

The invitation to attend a virtual AGM gave me the opportunity to hear about the work of the Warwickshire Young Carers Charity and how it supports young carers from the age of 8 upwards, helping to make a difference in their lives by encouraging them to take part in activities and experiences, which motivate and inspire them to achieve their own dreams.

Unlike usually formal AGMs this one gave the opportunity to young carers themselves to get involved in planning, preparing and presenting information from the annual report of the trustees. They even presented their own form of Oscars to recognise the importance and value of the opportunities that had been provided during the year. The Charity also provides support for families through Parenting Coffee mornings and targeted one-to-one sessions which tailor support specific to family needs. There is also a Befriending Programme aimed at reducing isolation by providing young carers with opportunities to build confidence, make new friends and engage in social activities. As Mayor of Atherstone I was pleased to hear that amongst the "Oscar" Nominations for most exciting activity was a Stand Up Paddleboarding Experience at Ruby's Yard, Atherstone.

Tuesday, November 5th, Visit to St. Giles Hospice

During my term as Mayor of Atherstone, I have chosen to support the fundraising efforts of our Atherstone Friends of St. Giles Hospice. As a result of this we were invited by Alison Tumelty, Fundraising Coordinator for the St. Giles Hospice Charity, to visit the Hospice and learn more about its work. The in-patient unit is housed in a modern, bright and welcoming building, which we were told was opened back in 2012. The service is free to patients, from a very wide area taking in Atherstone, that have been referred for Hospice care.

Having been greeted by Alison, we were taken on a tour of the patient facility by Ward Manager, Sharon. Each of the well-equipped and comfortable rooms we were shown had been very thoughtfully designed with patient and family needs in mind. Doors opening on to outdoor terraces were wide enough for a bed to be pushed through so that, even if a patient could not use a wheelchair to go outside, they still had the opportunity to access the outdoor space and enjoy the fresh air. There was an indoor sanctuary space where people

could sit, reflect and contemplate. We were told that there had been a couple of weddings held there to accommodate the wishes of patients and families.

Whilst the Hospice does provide end of life care it is not limited to that and it can offer short stays for patients who may need specific treatment to manage particular aspects of their illness. We were very impressed to see the environment provided for patients as well as to learn how patients' individual needs and wishes are at the heart of the care provided. It is not only families who are welcome to visit, but even family pets are welcome.

We were pleased to be introduced to a number of members of the St. Giles team during the visit all of whom were very welcoming, including Joan, one of the regular volunteers at the Hospice, who at the age of 92 is still an enthusiastic supporter, prolific fundraiser and jam-maker extraordinaire.

Alison shared a presentation with us giving us some facts and figures about the work of the Hospice and its financial background. 80 % of the work and care provided is out in the community supporting patients and families. The Hospice also provides bereavement services. The fund-raising is essential to ensure that the work can continue. St. Giles Hospice as an organisation is very appreciative of all the donations it receives.

I am pleased that there will be an opportunity at the upcoming Dickens Civic Reception to raise some further funds, through ticket sales and a raffle.