

Mayor's Report for Atherstone Town Council Meeting January, 2026

Donations for Civic Events by local businesses

I have been very pleased to receive donations from a number of local businesses to support fundraising activities for my chosen charities, Atherstone Veterans' Contact Point and Restore Collective's Men's Wellbeing Group. The fundraiser events were The Quiz on Saturday, November 22nd and the Civic Reception for the Dickens Event on November 29th.

Amongst the donors are The Works Hair Design, Artigiano's, Darcy Mae Café, Planters Garden Centre, Smithy Farm Shop, Long Street Co-op, Bates the Butchers, Tesco and Edible Links. Many thanks to them all for their support.

Thursday, November 20th Visit to Atherstone Children and Family Centre

I was welcomed to the Children's Centre by Michelle the Receptionist and was then invited to attend a Stay and Play Session, meet Gemma O'Neil, Participation and Engagement Lead Practitioner, and parents and carers who had brought their babies and toddlers to take part in the session. The purpose of my visit was to raise awareness of the Town Council's survey, available on the Town Council website, to gather views of users and residents about what needs to be considered when planning the redevelopment of St. Mary's Play Area. It was good to talk to a number of young mums who take their children to the playground and hear their thoughts about the equipment that their children use and also what they think is needed. Parents tell me that opportunities for climbing are needed once the children get to about 3 years of age, to develop strength and confidence. A zip wire was mentioned on several occasions. I have encouraged them to take part in the survey and have provided a poster to share with parents.

Friday, November 21st Chair of Warwickshire County Council Civic Dinner, Judges House, Warwick

We were invited to attend this Civic Dinner by Councillor Edward Harris, Chairman of Warwickshire County Council. After an initial drinks reception we were led into the very elegant dining room, where our dinner was served. This event was a recognition by Warwickshire of all the work done by councils for their local communities.

Saturday, November 22nd, Civic Charity Quiz, The Grove Sports and Social Club, Cooks Close, Atherstone

I feel very fortunate that I was able to secure the services of Michael Encot to be our Quizmaster for the evening. Thank you to Tracy for allowing us to use The Grove as the venue for this event. There was quite a turnout by the “Chain Gang”, including dignitaries from Alcester, Whitnash, North Warwickshire and Hinckley and Bosworth. Thank you to Town Councillor Dawn Wilkinson and our MP, Rachel Taylor, for supporting the event.

In total there were 11 teams competing and after 6 rounds of questions Team “Agatha Quisty” was declared the winner. A consolation bag of Jelly Babies was awarded to Team “Kayley’s Angels”, for their valiant efforts, despite which they came last. It was a very enjoyable evening. Thank you to everyone who came along, took part in the quiz and bought raffle tickets. Many thanks to individuals and local businesses for donating prizes to the raffle.

Saturday, November 29th, Dickens Event Civic Reception and Christmas Light Switch on

A very early start to the day began with setting up the raffle table at The Red Lion in readiness for the Civic Reception later. Many thanks to all those local businesses that supported the raffle with their donations including The Works Hair Salon, Bates the Butchers, Artigiano, Chapel House, Darcie Mae, Smithy Farm Shop, Long Street Co-op, Tesco and Edible Links. This was followed by walking around the Market Square and along Long Street to judge the best dressed window on behalf of The Dickens Committee. There were some very festive and stylish windows to be seen. I would be announcing the winner later before switching on the Christmas lights. Back at The Red Lion I was very pleased to greet the invited guests, amongst whom were Mayors and Consorts from Nuneaton and Bedworth, Alcester, Whitnash, The Chair of Warwickshire County Council and our MP Rachel Taylor. Thank you also to Atherstone Town Councillors, Keith Barnett, Rick Collins, Tony Short and Dawn Wilkinson for their support. In addition to Civic dignitaries, I was very pleased to welcome Elaine, Ivor and Fiona, representatives of Atherstone Veterans Contact Point, one of the groups I have chosen to raise funds for during this Mayoral year.

After the buffet many of the Civic party accompanied me to the Memorial Hall to join the procession leading Santa and his sleigh along Long Street, around the Market Square and to the families eagerly awaiting his arrival at this year’s

grotto. I was pleased that Santa had time to have his photo taken with me before he got to work greeting the children.

There was then time to wander around the town, call into St. Mary's and the Memorial Hall where there were Christmas stalls aplenty and to browse the shops for gifts, making a few purchases along the way.

It was lovely to join the crowds to do some shopping from the market stalls and listen to performances on the Market Square, including singing some carols with the A Town Sound. At 5pm I was back outside the Red Lion on Long Street to announce that the best dressed window winner was The Crystal Cavern on Long Street and then to invite the assembled crowd to join me in counting down to the lights switch on. Thank you to Mark Jordan and all the Dickens Event volunteers who work so hard throughout the year to make this event possible.

The finale to the whole event was, of course, the spectacular fireworks display, which lit up the skies over the town, heralding the beginning of the Christmas celebrations in Atherstone.

Thursday, December 11th, Leading Players Panto, OSCA, Owen Street, Atherstone

This year's performance by Leading Players was "Beauty and the Beast" and we were very happy to attend on the opening night, representing the Town Council. What a treat we were in for. This was a truly heart-warming production. The actors taking part were inspirational and the set and costumes spectacular. The audience applauded enthusiastically at the end and joined with the cast in singing "Here it is Merry Christmas". Thank you to Dawn Teagles, this year's Honorary Citizen, and her band of extraordinary volunteers who work with the adults of Leading Players to develop their confidence and performance skills, enabling them to be involved in theatrical productions that entertain and delight audiences time after time.

Friday, December 12th, NWBC Mayor's Civic Christmas Dinner, Marston Farm Hotel, Bodymoor Heath Road, Sutton Coldfield

Thank you to Debbie Bates, North Warwickshire Borough Mayor for inviting Alan and I to the NWBC Civic Dinner Dance. However, I was unaccompanied for the evening as Alan was unwell due to a medical procedure earlier in the day. The event was very well attended by other Civic Dignitaries, including the

Leader of the Borough Council, Mayors and Consorts from Alcester, Whitnash, Shipston, Nuneaton and Bedworth, both The Chair and Leader of Warwickshire County Council, as well as a number of Borough Councillors and former Mayors of NWBC. Funds raised by the event's raffle and Bottle in a Bag were going to support Community Volunteer Groups throughout North Warwickshire.

Tuesday, December 16th

Visit to Atherstone Nursery

I was very pleased to join parents, carers and children at the Nursery for a pre-Christmas activity workshop. When I first arrived I was welcomed by Headteacher Nicola Burton, who gave me a guided tour of the Nursery and introduced me to a number of staff members. The session I attended was one that parents and carers were allowed to stay for an hour with their children to engage in a number of Christmas related craft activities, including icing biscuits, making paper snowflakes, modelling snowmen and drawing Christmas pictures.

I was able to talk to adults about the survey the Town Council is currently conducting about St. Mary's Play Area, raising awareness of the proposed replacement of play equipment on the playground. I shared the link to the survey with the Nursery so that it could be shared electronically with parents.

Best wishes to everyone at The Nursery for a very happy Christmas.

Hinckley and Bosworth Mayor's Civic Christmas Carol Service, St. John's Church, Coventry Road, Hinckley

Many thanks to Mayor Richard Fleming and his wife Jill for the invitation to this Carol Service. We were able to meet the retired Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Leicestershire, Elizabeth Turnbull, who I was to discover had very strong family links to Atherstone, being a member of both the Vero and Stafford families. I was also very pleased to meet the High Sheriff of Leicestershire, Stephen Bryan. In addition, I met Mayors from Oadby and Wigston, Charnwood, and Melton Mowbray. It was a very festive occasion with lots of well-known carols and audience participation. Donations from the evening were in aid of Leicestershire Air Ambulance and Worklinks.

Thursday, December 18th, A Town Sound Christmas Concert, St. Mary's Church, Atherstone

St. Mary's Church was packed with everyone who had come along to enjoy this very festive occasion. From the very start the audience was keen to get

involved, with some very enthusiastic singing. The A Town Sound did not disappoint. There was a varied programme, including solos and duets from the choir, that were greatly appreciated by the audience. I was very pleased to be invited to say a few words at the beginning of the evening and to help draw the raffle at the interval. There was a very popular tombola and raffle to raise funds for the chosen charities, Polesworth Donkey Sanctuary and a local Memory Café, which I believe, along with ticket sales raised over £1000. A fantastic evening which really got everyone in the Christmas spirit. Thanks so much to Christine of The A Town Sound for the kind invitation.