

Mayor's Report for ATC Meeting 23.7.2025

Saturday July 12th, Alcester Civic Service, St. Nicholas Church, Alcester

This was an extremely hot day, so the cool of the church interior was very welcome. The service was led by Reverend Katie Cross, and was to commission the recently appointed Mayor of Alcester, Councillor David Henderson and to announce his chosen charity. The Mayor introduced the charity he has chosen to support, Alcester Day Care. After which a short presentation was given by Carol Zambonini describing the support that the charity provides for local people; those suffering with memory issues, dementia and their carers.

A very talented young musician, Samuel Harper-Mills, a pupil at Alcester Grammar School, played three classical piano pieces which were warmly applauded by the assembled Civic Dignitaries, guests and families.

Afterwards, refreshments were provided in the Church for all who attended.

Monday July 14th Leading Players, OSCA, Atherstone

The hall at OSCA was packed this morning for Leading Players' musical extravaganza, "The Singing Sensations". The show was a musical collaboration between Leading Players and members of our local community Choir, The A Town Sound. The show took us on from the jungle, with music from The Lion King, to a journey along the Yellow Brick Road, with characters from the Wizard of Oz. Then after a brief stop off at a mouse- infested windmill in old Atherstone on to Austria and the home of the Von Trapp family, arriving eventually on the streets of Revolutionary France with songs from "Les Miserables". The audience joined in with a rousing rendition of Abba's, "Thank you for the Music", which brought the show to a close.

The musical director of this theatrical tour de force was the multi-talented Christine Jones and appearing on stage alongside the Leading Players actors was Atherstone Town Council's very own Councillor Chris Jones. Also performing in the production was another super- talented local, Laura Donnelly, who we were to discover is an accomplished soprano. Clearly, the whole cast enjoyed performing for the audience and it was a truly wonderful experience. I'm sure that by the end of the show there wasn't a dry eye in the house. Thank you, Dawn Teagles and all the volunteers, both on and off stage, who helped with the production and to everyone who supports, encourages and enables the many activities undertaken by Leading Players.

Tuesday, July 15th, Year 7 Graduation and Awards, TQEA, Atherstone

We arrived to the sound of the strains of electric guitar music played by TQEA student, Harry O'Neill. The mix of rock and heavy metal had toes tapping and was certainly a thrilling start to the proceedings. After a warm welcome from Principal, Neil Harding, the award ceremony began.

A balloon arch was in place in the hall, ready for the photos that would be taken of all the Award winners during the ceremonies. This year due to the volume of students and to accommodate all the families wishing to attend the ceremony, two separate Awards Ceremonies for Year 7 took place.

The awards recognised both progress and endeavour of students over a wide range of curriculum subjects. Miss Hargadon, Head of Year 7, presented awards to members of each of the 6 Year 7 Tutor Groups, who were recognised for the underlying principles of The Academy- Pride, Endeavour, Resilience and Kindness. A multitude of students were recognised by presentation of certificates for Exceptional Behaviour and Outstanding Attendance.

I was very pleased to be called upon to present the Head of Year Awards and also to present The Queen Elizabeth Academy Charity Community Award to Dillon Clamp, who I recognised immediately as I had seen him performing only a few days earlier in TQEA's production of "Mary Poppins Junior".

This was followed by the presentation of The TQEA Personal Progress Awarded, presented by Craig Bird, Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, to Laurel Sanford.

The winning Tutor Group of the Year Award was presented by Head of Year, Miss Hargadon, to 7SK.

At the end of each of the award ceremonies students were rewarded with ice creams from the ice cream van outside. Parents and carers were invited to stay for refreshments in the Dining Hall.

Wednesday, July 16th, St. Giles Coffee Morning, Chapel House, Atherstone

Following yesterday's downpour we were very fortunate with the weather today and were able to sit outside in the garden of Chapel House to enjoy the sunshine and the teas, coffees and cakes at the annual fund-raiser for St. Giles Hospice. I was particularly pleased to be able to present a giant cheque representing money which had been raised for the charity during my previous mayoral year. Charlotte Mills, St. Giles Community and Events Officer, was very pleased to receive the donation of £1530.66, which had been raised at the Civic Service at St. Mary's in September, the Dickens Event Reception at The Red Lion in November and the Charity Quiz at The Grove Sports and Social Club in April.

The coffee morning was well-supported by our local community. Not only was there a raffle, but also a tombola, a book stall and lots of lovely cakes on sale so I hope the event will have raised a significant amount for the charity.

Opening of new Family Room Facility at St. Giles Hospice, Lichfield

After the Coffee Morning we drove to St. Giles Hospice to attend the opening of the new Family Room at the Hospice. The CEO of the Charity, Elinor Eustace, opened the proceedings by talking about the work of the Hospice and how the Charity not only cared for and supported the patient but also was acutely aware of the needs of the patients' family and friends at a stressful and distressing time. In particular, the Family Room facility would enable visitors to spend more time with patients, with the opportunity to take breaks in comfortable surroundings rather than sitting in corridors. The husband of a patient who had received end of life care at the Hospice, described his experience as the father of a very young family and how the Family Room would be of particular benefit for visiting families, especially those with children.

After a short speech from one of the nursing staff and a ribbon cutting ceremony there was an opportunity to look around the facility itself. It is a welcoming and comfortable space furnished with lounge furniture, dining table and chairs, kitchen and bathroom facilities, as well as recreation area with television and toys and games for children. I'm sure that this will be a valuable and much appreciated space for the families of any future patients.

Thursday, July 17th, Visit to Atherstone Veterans' Contact Point, Alexandra Court, Atherstone

I went along to visit the group at their usual Thursday meeting. I was pleased to meet a number of people including Elaine Hopkins and talk to them about supporting their group during my current mayoral year. Over a welcome cup of tea, I spoke about the fund-raising events planned for the year and expressed my hope to invite them to the Civic Service at St. Mary's Church on the afternoon of Saturday, September 20th.

Year 9 Graduation and Awards, TQEA, Atherstone

It was my pleasure to attend the Year 9 Graduation and Award Ceremony at The Academy this afternoon. This was a celebration of completing Year 9 and also an opportunity to look ahead to the challenges students will face as they move into Year 10. The assembled audience of students, teachers, families, together with ourselves, fellow governor and former Mayor Ashley Wickham-Young were entertained by the wonderful piano playing of Ellie-May Hepplewhite-Preston. Awards were presented by Mrs. Alison Morris, Deputy Principal and Head of Year 9 Miss Hudson. Curriculum awards for Progress and Endeavour were presented, followed by Tutor Group Awards. Numerous certificates were presented to students to celebrate Exceptional Behaviour and Outstanding Attendance. I was called upon to present the Head of Year Awards and trophies as well as presenting the Community Award to Archie Wortley, on behalf of the TQEA Charity Trust. Amongst the many prize winners I was pleased to congratulate Ella Deeming, who was the undoubted star, in the role of Mary Poppins, in TQEA's recent theatrical production.

This was followed by the presentation of the TQEA Personal Progress Award by Ashley Wickham-Young to Thomas Doughty

The Tutor Group of the Year Award was presented to 9ETH

At the closing of the proceedings students were invited to move outside to collect the ice cream rewards awaiting them.

Parents and families were then invited to take refreshments in the Dining Hall and take photos with their children by the balloon arch if they wished. Thank you to Neil Harding, Principal for inviting us to the event.

Friday, July 18th, Charity Quiz Night, Eric Payne Community Centre, Alcester

The new Mayor of Alcester, David Henderson and his Consort, wife Lesley, welcomed us to this Civic Fundraising Quiz in aid of his chosen charity, Alcester Day Care. Raffle tickets were on sale and an opportunity to guess the Name of the Bear, a gigantic light brown teddy. The bear in question will be putting in an appearance at all the fund-raising coffee mornings planned for the Mayor's Civic programme, so it's likely we won't know its name for some time, at least until all the suggested names have been filled.

The quiz was run by the Deputy Mayor Gill and her husband Tim. Alan and I joined a team comprising of a former Mayor of Alcester, Vaughan Blake and his wife, Kay and the Mayor of Redditch Joanne Kane and her husband, John. Our team name was 2 Mayors and a Has-Been! We didn't do too badly and despite a disastrous round identifying flags we came a creditable 3rd. A very enjoyable evening meeting Civic friends and making new ones.

Sunday, July 20th, St. Margaret's Day Concert, St. Margaret's Church, Whitnash

We were invited by the new Mayor of Whitnash, Councillor Adrian Barton to join him and his Consort Kathy at his parish church, St. Margaret's to celebrate St. Margaret's Day and to support his fund-raising efforts on behalf of Warwickshire Vision and Warwickshire Hearts.

Warwickshire Vision, previously known as Warwickshire Association for the Blind has been supporting visually impaired people for over a century. Interestingly, it was set up in North Warwickshire to support miners who were suffering with sight issues due to working in the mines.

Warwickshire Hearts was originally a project set up by Warwick District First Responders, Evelyn's Gift Charity and Waterside Medical Centre, Leamington Spa, to promote and carry out CPR and Defibrillator training across the Warwick District Council Area. It is now a registered charity, working on behalf of West Midlands Ambulance Service, but is entirely dependent on community fund raising.

The performers at the concert were a very talented singer/guitarist, Ryan Sloan and also The Myton Hospice Choir. It was a very enjoyable musical afternoon. During the interval we were all invited to enjoy the teas, coffees and cakes with an opportunity to make further donations to both of the nominated charities as well as Myton Hospice.

The concert was well-attended by Civic Dignitaries from around the county, including Coleshill, Leamington, Warwick, Solihull, Southam, Rugby and, of course, Atherstone. It was a pleasant surprise to discover that the Mayor of Rugby, Councillor Barbara Brown, was a former work colleague of mine, who I came to know many years ago, whilst working as a School Improvement Adviser with Warwickshire County Council.