

**Mayor's Report, Councillor Sara Bishop,
for October 15.10.25 Town Council Meeting**

Thursday, September 18th Tesco Store, Station Street, Atherstone

Following enquiries made by the Deputy Clerk, about the possibility of Tesco, in Atherstone, supporting the forthcoming Civic Service by donating refreshments, the Community Champion, Claire, a member of Tesco's staff, invited us to the store to collect the donations and have photos taken. I was very pleased to attend, together with my Consort and the Deputy Clerk, to collect Tesco's generous donation of refreshments for the forthcoming Civic Service. Thank you, Tesco for your continued support of the local community

Saturday, September 20th, Civic Service, St. Mary's Church, Atherstone

This is the second year of holding a Civic Service at St. Mary's. Following the retirement of Reverend Michael Brandsma earlier this year, I am very grateful, to our Area Dean, Rev David Poultney, for leading the Service and to everyone at St. Mary's, for enabling this event to take place there.

As Mayor of Atherstone, I was very pleased to welcome so many Civic Dignitaries from within Warwickshire and beyond, including amongst others, The High Sheriff of Warwickshire, The Chair of Warwickshire County Council, The Deputy Mayor of North Warwickshire, and neighbouring Mayors from Coleshill, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Tamworth, Solihull, and Whitnash. Thank you also to my fellow Town Councillors, who were able to attend the service, for their continued support and encouragement. Also in attendance were Honorary Citizens, representatives of local community groups, including Royal British Legion, Cohort 4 and First Responders. Amongst invited guests were a number of local veterans including Jane Wintrip, who until recently ran a much-loved local business in the town and was instrumental in my being in contact with the Veterans Group.

Thanks, too, to both our Deputy Clerk, Sally Oldham and her assistant Ben for all their work and help in putting this Service together.

Following a Bible reading by my Consort, Alan Bishop, John Stock, Reader at St. Mary's, delivered a thought-provoking reflection, and referred to its theme of service, sacrifice and support. It was an opportunity to reflect on and recognise the different ways we can serve, to protect and secure the safety and well-being of others, the sacrifices, both physical and mental made by individuals and groups on behalf of their communities, and the support which can be given in recognition of such service.

In my address to the assembled guests and members of the congregation I thanked them for their valuable contributions, past and present, to their communities, recognising and celebrating their service.

The focus for Mayoral fundraising this year is to support two local groups- Atherstone Veteran's Contact Point and Restore Collective's Men's Well-being Group.

Ivor Hopkins from the Veteran's Group and Craig Bird of Restore Collective both described the activities that any donations would be supporting.

Following this, I invited The High Sheriff of Warwickshire, Karen Lynch, to present a Warwickshire Changemaker Award to local volunteer, Mr. Badley Ainsworth.

Thank you to local businesses; Greencore and our own Atherstone branch of Tesco for their support, in providing refreshments for all those attending the service. Thanks also to all the volunteers from St. Mary's, who helped to serve the refreshments in the Lounge at the end of the service.

During the service we were entertained by Christine Evans and her contemporary music choir "The A Town Sound". I'm very grateful that they were able to come and take part in the service again this year. Their performance was greatly enjoyed by everyone present.

Thank you to everyone who attended and to all those involved in organising and making this such a joyful occasion.

Tuesday, October 7th, High Sheriff of Warwickshire's Legal Service at St. Mary's Church, Warwick

I was very pleased to represent Atherstone at this service of thanksgiving in the very grand setting of the Collegiate Church of Saint Mary in Warwick. Along with all the other assembled guests, I was welcomed by The Rector of Warwick, Reverend Canon Angus Aagaard, who is also Chaplain to the High Sheriff. A number of faith leaders from the local community were included; Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Christian faiths were all represented. Along with the many Civic Leaders present there were representatives from public services, - Police, Fire and Rescue, Ambulance, Search and Rescue, Court, Prison and Probation, Community and Charity Groups and Education Services. The Warwickshire Police Cadets delivered readings from the Bible introduced by a surprise guest, a well-known former presenter of the much-loved TV series "Blue Peter", Diane-Louise Jordan.

Musical contributions were provided by "Shchedryk" Rugby Ukrainian Ladies' Choir, Warwickshire Schools Foundation King Henry VIII Consort, Warwick Preparatory School Senior Choir, and Warwick School Fanfare Team.

This was a very diverse and uplifting service with a particular focus on peace, community and securing the future for our young people. The Young High Sheriff, Sophia Wilk, read out an extract from her winning submission about why she was motivated to apply for the position and the historical role of The High Sheriff in ensuring the safety of the community.

The High Sheriff, Karen Lynch MBE, also presented a number of Changemaker Awards. This is an initiative she has introduced this year to acknowledge and celebrate individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to their local communities throughout Warwickshire, volunteering, supporting and serving others. I was delighted that one of our own Atherstone Changemakers, Dawn Teagles, was also at the service.

Friday, October 8th, Presentation to Ben Oldham, Town Council Office, Atherstone

It was my great pleasure, along with the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jacky Chambers, to present our Admin Assistant, Ben Oldham, with a leaving card and gift on behalf of the Town Council. Thank you, Ben, for all the work you have done for the Council over a number of years. It was interesting to see a photo of Ben at age 7 in his hi-vis jacket at the opening of St. Mary's Play Area. I understand he had the responsibility of giving out balloons to the children who were at the opening ceremony- just one of the events he supported as a volunteer, before he progressed to being an occasional, paid member of the team, during his time as a sixth-former and later as a student.

Thank you to all Councillors who donated to Ben's gift. A particular thank you to Sally, Deputy Clerk, for organising the collection, card and gift. I'm sure Ben will find his voucher very useful as he begins his new career with Birmingham University.