

Mayor's Report

Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

I had the great honour of becoming Mayor in May last year and I am proud to say that I have seen first-hand the efforts of various community groups, and in some cases getting directly involved with their activities.

Chatteris in Bloom were awarded Silver Gilt last year by the Anglia in Bloom judges, a well-deserved reward considering that this group underwent some big changes earlier that year. Amy and I spent a few evenings before Judging Day by clearing the weeds and dead vegetation in the Market Hill Gardens, so hopefully some people will believe the Mayor has and will get his hands dirty!

The Midsummer Festival was again a success; despite the torrential rain on the Sunday everyone who attended or took part enjoyed it, especially the Tug-of-War and It's a Knockout contests. I even had to change my own clothes after being soaked to the skin – I'm sure there are pictures somewhere on the internet of a very sodden looking Mayor!

Remembrance Sunday and Remembrance Day itself was very well commemorated, and my wife and I had the honour to attend the parade and wreath laying ceremony. I also attended the excellent Service of Remembrance staged by the students of the Cromwell Community College.

Chatteris Christmas Lights once again did the town proud with another well-attended switch-on event; this included Chatteris' first Town Crier competition to select my successor in which I cried my last, and this post was (very convincingly) filled by Mr. Lawrence Weetman.

In between these events I was warmly welcomed to meetings hosted by the Chatteris Good Companions and the Rotary Club, and I was also able to give my support to the good work of the Royal British Legion Youth Section, who have only been running since November 2013.

In February I enjoyed hosting a Mayor's Ball, the first for a couple of years in Chatteris. The event was well supported by local people and businesses and raised over £500 for charity.

When I became Mayor, one of the things I wished to try and do during my term in office was raise the profile of Chatteris. I think it's fair to say Tesco saw to that very well in a less than positive light, when it was nationally reported that they would be postponing the opening of the store, literally days before it was due to actually open. However, as we have explained this evening Aldi are opening and we will keep on their case for updates on the development there.

On a different note, our profile may again be raised, but this time in a positive way thanks to the efforts of the Chatteris Museum curators in securing the loan of historical artefacts of national importance. These were originally discovered around the Chatteris area many years ago and are presently in the care of certain major UK museums. After successful funding bids for new display cases and replicas to be made of these artefacts, these will be returned 'home' in the coming months for everyone to admire and enjoy.

Back in January I and other Town Council colleagues, along with some members of the public, met with representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council to encourage them to reinstate adult learning in Chatteris. This seems to be moving in the right direction but we will not let the matter rest until something concrete is put in place. The Town Council has offered to help with the publicity of these courses and I truly hope that our efforts will bear fruit in the next few months.

Last month I attended another hugely positive event - the Pride of Fenland Awards. It made me enormously proud to see Chatteris win certificates by Lydia Payne, Lucy Peyton, the students of the Cromwell Community College and, awarded for the first time ever, the Judges Special Overall Award to the RBL Youth Section. The atmosphere when that was announced was electric and I was thrilled to see our town recognised in such an illustrious manner.

Another major event that I helped launch just recently was the new Town Plan. The Town Council invited Chatteris residents, businesses and organisations to a public meeting to ask people to form a Town Plan Working Group – this was a resounding success and next week sees the first meeting of the new steering group that is due to be appointed.

Lastly, it is with great sadness that one of our Town Council members, Terry Shad, passed away last Thursday morning. I had got to know Terry over the past four years of the present council and he will be missed; he was a diligent and hardworking councillor who very capably chaired the Planning Working Group. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time.

My wife Amy and I have very much enjoyed meeting and working with some of you over the past year. As such, we would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those individuals and organisations who help our community in many different ways, whether they are volunteers or members of the public services.

With all best regards,

Cllr. James Carney

Mayor of Chatteris, 2014-15.