

Retiring Chairman's Announcements

Members,

May I welcome on your behalf those Honorary Alderman who have graced us with their presence today, Honorary Alderman Patricia Banks, Michael Cartwright, Susan Glasspool, Pamela Peskett, Margaret Snaith-Tempia and Michael Woodhall.

Thank you to all of our Alderman who have supported us throughout the past year.

Congratulations to Councillor Ray Finch on his election to the European Parliament.

I have circulated my list of engagements since we last met in February, via email.

There are, of course, some engagements over the year that are memorable and upon which I have commented.

However, the last three months have been as busy as ever and we have been graced with three Royal visits in the space of three months.

ROYAL VISITS

- Their Royal Highnesses, The Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall visited the Mary Rose Museum on February 24th and since the County Council is a major donor to the building of this marvellous museum, I was in the welcoming party but also in the groups of donors who met their Royal Highnesses separately. Over the last three years I had met Prince Harry, and the Duke of Edinburgh, at the Mary Rose site but it was a great pleasure to meet Prince Charles since he is Patron to the Mary Rose Trust and, of course, 15 years ago he dived to the wreck of the Mary Rose before it was lifted to the surface of the Solent.
- On 9th May, HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visited the liner Queen Mary II in Southampton and my Vice Chairman deputised for me since I had a long standing commitment to visit the Basingstoke Canal where we have developed the infrastructure. The Duke did not ask where I was, and I am indebted to Cllr Davidovitz for deputising for me.
- On the 12th May, Prince William visited the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport. He rededicated HMS Alliance which has graced Gosport for many years, and it is to the credit of the people of Gosport that the submarine is now totally renovated and is so well loved by them.

VISITS TO GOSPORT

- Throughout my Leadership of the Council, I have regarded both Aldershot and Gosport as areas for special support from Hampshire. In particular in Gosport, together with the Borough Council, with the Housing and Communities Agency, and with Taylor Wimpey; we have regenerated an area known as Rowner, and which had deteriorated under an absent landlord to

such an extent that when I first visited Rowner in 2003, I was appalled at what I saw. Now, 10 years later, together, we have built 500 houses; we have a flourishing Childrens Centre, a re-vitalised primary school, a supermarket and a pharmacy.

On the 12th March, I visited Gosport Rowner to see the progress we had made, and on 8th May I attended a photo-shoot with the Mayor of Gosport and our private partners to mark the demolition of a high rise block of flats which were a blot on the landscape of Gosport. Another 500 units of accommodation will be built over the next two years or so. I am very proud of what we have achieved in partnership with private industry.

PRESENTATION OF BRITISH EMPIRE MEDALS AND QAVS

- It was a privilege to host the award ceremony for the presentation of the British Empire Medal by the Lord Lieutenant on 18th March to eight recipients from our County. This ceremony was held at Serle's House which is proving an ideal location for such ceremonies.
- It was also a privilege to host a Reception to mark eight voluntary organisations in Hampshire who have been nominated for the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service to the community. Again, this was held in Serle's House in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant.

OTHER EVENTS

- I count myself fortunate to have played a part in the 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth', to playing a part in the High Sheriff of Hampshire's Awards in the Great Hall, to have officiated in the Good Neighbours – Young & Old reception in the Great Hall, and to have attended the Opening of the UK's newest container handling port at Southampton.

MY CONCERT

- On the 26th April we held the Chairman's Musical Concert in the Great Hall, which was extremely well attended with over 140 guests. Our Music Service delighted us all and, in particular, a seven year old Violinist, and an eight year old Harpist. They seemed to me to warrant the title of infant prodigy, and I learned that the young lady of seven, the violinist, is learning Bruch's Violin Concerto, which is one of my favourite's and cannot be easy for anyone to play.
- I helped to officiate at a Citizenship Ceremony on 21st May held at the Winchester Register Office. These are lovely ceremonies and Members, when you are approached to help, please accept the invitation. This particular event conferred citizenship of the UK on 21 people, of whom 13 were from the Commonwealth. This was conferred on four young people ranging from 4 years of age to 14.

In all of this, I have been very well supported by Colin Davidovitz and he has provided me with much wise Counsel throughout the year. My thanks also to Natalie Jones, my PA, who has done her best to keep me on the straight and narrow, so thank you Natalie. My immense gratitude.

Members, in a few moments I return to the back benches where I served for 22 years before ascending this dais where I have served for a further 15 years; 14 as Leader and one year as your Chairman.

I am proud of what has been achieved during my leadership by us all, and that Hampshire moved from what one Liberal Democrat County Council Leader described as a “fuddy duddy Hampshire” to one known as one of the best in the Country.

I even had the honour of Chairing the County Councils Network, and serving on the LGA’s National Executive, so that Hampshire was there at Local Authorities top table.

As I rejoin you on the back benches a word to you all about what I have learned in my 37 years here.

Never forget Members who gave you the privilege of serving on this County Council, your constituents.

You owe them your loyalty, and this loyalty sometimes transcends your own Party loyalty.

You owe your constituents your energies and your attention to their needs, whether they voted for you or not.

You owe them your best judgement on the many issues that will face this Council over the next three years.

You owe them your dedication and commitment to serving them to the best of your abilities.

You owe them improvement in their quality of life, and to meet their aspirations.

Above all, you owe them a County that supports them, nurtures them, cares for the disadvantaged, and provides all with emotional and physical security.

If you achieve these things, your constituents will reward you in three years time by returning you to this historic Chamber, whatever your Party politics; for you will have served them faithfully and well.

I look forward to working with you now, for the good of the people of Hampshire.

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