

Chairman's report 2017-2018

I am quite amazed that I'm already looking at writing my 10th chairman's report. It just shows you that time goes quickly when you're enjoying yourself. This year I'm going to concentrate more on my role as the Mayor of Crediton. This is a civic role, which means that I represent the town at a host of different events, both in the town and in the district.

In early May I was honoured to attend the 50th anniversary of the Townswomen's Guild. It was a great pleasure to join them in celebrating this important anniversary. I don't know if they can exist in this world of equal opportunities by calling themselves a "Women's Guild!" But I can report that they do a lot of good work in the town.

June was a busy month as I opened Credfest on the third and attended a concert given by the St Boniface Concert Society later in the month. There is no doubt in my mind that Credfest is a wonderful event and the result of a lot of hard work. It showcases so much that goes on in the town.

In July I was a member of the not very successful Town Council boules team. This is a competition organised by the Twinning Association of which I am a member, representing the town council. This fits in very well with my love of France, ability to speak French and inability to play boules!

July was also the month in which I attended my favourite event of the year as Mayor (apart from my Mayor's Reception that is!) namely the Mid Devon Show. Having spent 25 years in the country in Wales I am always pleased to be able to look over good quality animals. This show is one of the few one-day shows in the country and so those attending can see all the exhibits.

This was a year of anniversaries as in September I was invited to attend Devonshire Homes' 25th anniversary. This again is a group that does much in the district and in our town

In October, I attended a workshop for the parish path partnership, which was of great interest as I am the chairman of the town council's P3 committee. Many people probably do not know that there is a wide network of footpaths around town. In July we inaugurated the Redvers Ramble, which was the brainchild of Heather Sansom. I am reliably informed that there will be another ramble this July!

On November 12, I attended one of the poignant meetings of my mayoral year namely the Service of Remembrance. As usual I read the first lesson, headed a very large parade to the War Memorial where my army cadet, Lewis Cook, laid the wreath on behalf of me and the council. The attending crowd was the biggest I can ever remember.

On 27 November I was in Exeter for the annual police awards. It is always very illuminating to listen to the commendations of the various officers and members of the public who received these awards. I was delighted that three of the recipients were from the Crediton area. I think they too were pleased that the mayor of their town was there to see them receive their awards.

This year we tried a new approach to Christmas in Crediton. We did away with the High Street Parade which caused so many headaches because we needed such a large number of marshals and it was also very costly to close the High Street. Last year the event centred around the town square and I was pleased to open the event, thank the various sponsors and join in the celebrations.

In January I represented the Town Council at an arts centre event, a wonderful play called The Tinderbox. I have never heard of it before but it was enchanting and the singing was delightful. This is one of the perks of being the mayor!

Also in January I attended a meeting arranged by CPRE, which looked at the challenges of the Greater Exeter Strategic Plan. I do not know to what extent this level of cooperation will help Crediton but it was good to be there to see what the vision is.

Apart from all these events that I attended, I try to get to as many market days as possible for my Mayor's Surgery. I probably attend 20 and miss one or two each year. This is something that I do because I think it is incumbent upon me as Mayor and as a town councillor to give people of the town the opportunity to engage. They can ask questions, pose problems, complain or even congratulate me on the way things are going in the town! Yes this really does happen! It is a big commitment and most of the time I am the only member of the Council on the square but I think it is important and has given me and the Council some very useful feedback.

Over the past months the big issues raised by people have been potholes, parking and the fate of the Council Office building. All I can tell them is that I am doing my best to make sure it stays within the control of Crediton Town Council!

I would like to close by thanking our wonderful staff Clare, Emma, Sandie and her replacement Emily. I would also like to thank my wife Natalia for her constant help and support and for carrying out her role as Town Mayoress with such enthusiasm and dignity.

Frank Letch (Mayor of Crediton)