

SDC Chairman's Report 2018/2019

Community Wellbeing has been at the heart of my year and being in our local community, supporting the regular activities which bring people together and the many volunteers who organise and run them has been eye opening and rewarding. The Forget-me-Not and Dementia Cafes, Pop-Up Sue encouraging gentle exercise whilst enjoying social time, and work with people with disabilities giving opportunities in both sport and music

Visits to groups we support through our Community Grants has given me first hand experience of how the financial support is needed and wisely used and I thank local members who have joined me on these visits.

The year began with our most successful Big Sing, bringing together choirs of all ages from all over the district and people are still talking about it, and we are asked when will you do it again! We journeyed through our wonderful summer, supporting summer fetes and garden parties and not to forget our annual cricket match on The Vine - always a fun time supported by Garry's BBQ.

It was a delight to see the Family Fun Days being enjoyed by so many families and young people held in many of our more rural areas - a bit of a challenge finding some of the locations!

Mental Health Week is held in October and I highlighted the work of organisations who provide support and help for those who need it by encouraging events and linking in to those already held in the district.

It has been a year to remember with the 100 years celebrations of the end of World War 1 and I was proud to be your Chairman with so many wonderful events leading up to Sunday 11th November - afternoon tea with a Deputy Lieutenant representing the Queen - school service with the children, the excellent Stag Youth Theatre production of their interpretation of short history of WW1 and the Act of Remembrance in Sevenoaks on the Sunday followed by an evening of the Hartley community coming together for the lighting of the Beacon.

We also remembered the 100 year anniversary of some women getting the vote, taking presentations out to local schools during National Democracy Week and producing a short video to show how the lives of women have changed since that time.

Celebrating the 100 years of the RAF in the summer was also an event at which I felt very proud to be included. Remembering our Armed Forces is very much part of this Council's year with Flag Raising events on Armed Forces Day, Merchant Navy Day and Commonwealth Day.

Supporting local arts and sports events at the Sevenoaks District Sports Council Awards and the Sevenoaks Three Arts Festival shows the encouragement given to local youngsters, through the grants to the two organisations by this Council, enables them to progress. Attending a hockey match on what must have been the coldest day in the winter; a Boxing Club show to present awards, joining the first

session of the minis at Swanley Rugby club, being invited to hear the Lydian Orchestra, Sevenoaks Philharmonic and Sevenoaks Symphony Orchestra have shown me the dedication of people who enjoy coming together to rehearse and then performing a high standards to bring enjoyment to others.

During the year Every Step Count walks have been launched in Chevening, Riverhead, Greatness Park Sevenoaks and Hextable and I have been really pleased to support this initiative in encouraging people into gentle exercise and a time of socialising over refreshments.

The Christmas period was enjoyable and busy with many lovely Carol Services, School prizegiving and productions. Ian and I spent a very different Christmas Day visiting patients in Sevenoaks Hospital, spending time with Steve in the CCTV room and lunch with Age UK at Hollybush and elderly people who would otherwise have been on their own. It is a day we will always remember.

How lovely it was to support staff initiated events at the Council offices on Children in Need Day and the Christmas Giving Tree for the Women's Refuge and Elenor Hospice and I thank the generosity of the staff and members in supporting these events.

I was so proud to be part of Sevenoaks District Council at the Community Awards Evening when we acknowledged the fantastic volunteers and organisations we have in this district - and our Leader Peter's unique way of comparing certainly added something special to the event. I would like to record my thanks to the team of staff members who organised and managed the evening so superbly.

I am really glad that I will end my term as Chairman by being invited to start the Run, Walk Push event in Knole Park for Dementia, raising funds to support and develop services in the district.

The civic role of the Chairman is also busy but enjoyable and I have represented Sevenoaks District at many Civic Services in Kent, Surrey and London, the most memorable as being different was the Blessing of the Sea with the Greek Orthodox community in Margate on a very cold day in January and the Ordination of the new Bishop of Tonbridge at St Paul's Cathedral last summer. I was pleased to be well supported by fellow Mayors, Chairman, past chairman and colleagues at my own Civic Service in our little church in the woods in West Kingsdown in February.

Supporting charitable events is a very enjoyable part of the role and even rising to the challenge of the Mayor of Sevenoaks and joining him to complete a Firewalk on the Vine, again on the coldest night in January - an experience I would do again!

The Chairman has the opportunity to support a charity during the year in office and, as many of you will know, I have been holding events to raise funds for the Silas Pullen Fund and these have included curry meals; dragon boat race; a day at Brands Hatch Motor Racing circuit, indoor bowls evening; a lunch at Knole Academy prepared, cooked and served by the students and an End of Term Dinner in May. It is hoped that we will have raised around £14,500 which will go to research into paediatric brain tumours and hope fully help to save lives in the future.

It has been a fantastic year which Ian and I have thoroughly enjoyed and I believe that I have demonstrated to the local community that the District Council is both interested in and grateful for the work that is undertaken by groups and individuals to improve the lives of others.

Thank you to Cllr John Edwards-Winsor for his support during the year - here in Sevenoaks it has very much developed into a "team" going out into the community and we certainly have had some fun along the way - even if we learnt little from all the quiz nights attended! I do hope that this continues and I wish John and his wife Frances a very successful year and I hope that his Vice Chairman gives him the support he has extended to me.

The smooth operation of the "Chairman" needs a good back up team, and we certainly have that with our staff in Democratic Services. Thank you to Vanessa, George, Holly and Charlotte for all your support, help and assistance and to the support from Lesley Bowles and the Senior Management Team.

Last, but by no means least, a very big thank you to Ian, husband, chauffeur, bag carrier, photographer, dresser and total support in all that we have undertaken during the year - it would have been a much harder job without him!

Pat Bosley, May 2019