



MAYOR'S BLOG

June 2024

Sunday 30 June - Hampshire Scouts Annual Review & AGM - Fernycroft

Wow, what a day! Ferny Croft is the adventure wonderland of the Hampshire Scouts. 31 acres of pure fun. If you are a scout and find that there is nothing here for you then you haven't looked very hard. We were escorted around the site and found that there is shooting, archery, an intimidating zip line, several climbing walls, abseiling, crazy golf, low-rope obstacle course among the 40 plus activities.

During our tour we visited the onsite Scout Museum, what a trip down memory lane, so many of the things I did or had in scouting are now of historical interest.

The day saw the new Low Rope obstacle course opened by the High Sheriff of Hampshire, Jon Whitaker JP DL. He then asked if any Mayors might like to test their balance and try to negotiate the numerous challenges, I of course accepted and was able to complete the course without falling once.

After a delicious midday BBQ we moved to the AGM. Here we were impressed by the report from the participants of the international Jamboree and Project 23, a European event, both hugely successful.

We also heard about the progress of the latest scout sections, Squirrels. This is a division for 4 – 6 year olds. Hampshire is leading the UK in setting them up and is close to establishing the 100th Drey.

The setting up of a Drey requires the recruitment of adult leaders, the Squirrels are readily available! The leaders function as a group rather than a single person being in sole charge. Get involved, full training is given followed by plenty of support.

Saturday 29 June 2024 - Dawson Lodge Residential Home, Garden Party

Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress

Blessed with one of the very few sunny days this summer it was the ideal time to be attending a garden party. The residents were celebrating the refurbishment of their garden – with fresh plants and a general wash and brush up of the outside fittings. The work having been carried out by the daughter, of one of the residents, and her work colleagues from National Air Traffic Service. The garden looked superb.

A short speech of thanks was given by the Manager, Kirsten Stewart, and a resident formally declared the garden open with a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Tea, cake and cocktails were provided whilst we were able to mingle and chat with the residents and their various guests. A lovely way to spend a perfect summer afternoon.

Saturday 29 June 2024 - Chandler's Ford Care Home Open Week

The Mayoress and I were met by Siobhan Bowker and Kanchi Sharma and introduced to one of the happiest group of carers I have ever met. There is a real atmosphere of fun in the home.

We had the pleasure of tea and cake whilst enjoying the company of some of the residents and staff.

The residents were in fine form and regaled stories from their past and were great company. The residents have decided to take over a small area to cultivate and plant flowers. This is to provide themselves with a project and some fun exercise.

Friday 28 June 2024 - Shakespeare School Summer Fayre

Shakespeare Junior School

The Mayoress and I were delighted to be asked to open the School Summer Fayre. The event started with some amazing baton twirling by Endeavour Twirl Team (find them on facebook). They perform dancing routines whilst twirling a batten. There were several routines one routine was performed by 5 year olds but using pompoms. They performed without any direction and were amazing. If you think it sounds easy you really need to give it a try!

There were a lot of stalls to entice youngsters to have a go. I had the pleasure of being escorted around the Fayre by Nikki Wilson, Shakespeare Infant School Head Teacher. The schools work closely together and as we went around the field dozens of kids came running up to greet us, Nikki knew every single one of them by name. Great fun.

Thursday 27 June 2024 - Theatre Royal Winchester: The Wind in the Willows

Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress

We were very lucky indeed to be invited by Blue Apple Theatre to attend their production of Wind in the Willows at the Theatre Royal, Winchester. Blue Apple Theatre supports learning disabled people to develop and showcase their performing arts skills and enables them to shine on stage and in life.

On our arrival we were greeted by and had the opportunity to chat with the current Chair of Blue Apple, Ed Rothead and Dr Alison Frater, the Chair Designate.

Blue Apple's version of the much loved Wind in the Willows combined tradition with a fresh perspective whilst paying due respect to Kenneth Grahame's creations'. A visual treat, songs, laughs and colourful characters; buffoonery, heroes, villains, jokes that wouldn't be out of place in a pantomime and an ending where all get their just rewards. The performance also included a guest cameo voice role by Chris Packham. The cast were absolutely amazing.

An evening to be remembered.

Saturday 22 June 2024 - Wetwheels Hamble Family Fun Day

Wetwheels is a charity that gives all disabled people, including those with profound and complex disabilities, the opportunity to access the sea in a safe, stimulating and rewarding way, on board specially-built, fully-accessible boats. Whilst some will have obvious disabilities that need to be catered for they also include those with Alzheimer's disease.

They organised a car show with a mixture of classic and modern super cars. There were even two Model T Fords on show, and when we were offered a ride in one of them, we were quick to say yes. I have to say it was a surprisingly comfy ride, even on the cobble stone of the High Street. We were also coaxed onto a powerful speed boat and taken out into the Southampton waters where the engine was tested to the fullest! We were well cared for and didn't get wet although there was quite a bit of spray.

The car show was organised by the Locks Heath Classic Car Club and the event was attended by hundreds of people. There were prizes for the top three cars, a beautiful Alvis won first prize, and there was a special prize for a Morris Minor Convertible that is used as a daily driver.

The event raised in excess of £3,000 for Wetwheels, this will enable them to provide more experiences for people with disabilities.

I do hope they invite us back next year.

Saturday 22 June 2024 - Merfest at Merdon Junior School, Chandler's Ford

Midday saw the mayoress and I open the Merfest event. This is the Merdon School Summer Fete. There were some interesting activities on offer. The 1st Chandler's Ford Scouts had an archery challenge, and there was an axe throwing competition (no sharp edges). The highest scores on the day won a prize. All run in a perfectly safe way. There were more traditional attractions, facepainting, having hair extensions fitted, raffles, Tombola, and a huge bouncy castle obstacle course. Then there was the reptile rescue tent. Here there were a surprising number of inquisitive snakes. One had a need to check out the Mayoress's robe, paying particular attention to the fur areas. But the snake was well behaved and seemed quite happy to slide around my arms and back to the keeper. We also met and enjoyed a talk with the team running the Marie Curie Plinko game to raise money for the charity. We were entertained by the Merdon school choir who sang a variety of popular songs. A wonderful time was had by all.

Saturday 15 June 2024 - Friends of In Touch AGM & 20th Anniversary Fun Day at Y-Zone Youth Centre, Fair Oak

We were greeted by Chris Parsons, Chairperson of In Touch and very much the motivator that spurs the team onwards. In Touch is a project that supports emotionally and socially vulnerable children and young people with autistic spectrum conditions. There are three groups: Junior, Senior and Young Adult. I had the pleasure of meeting several of the current members, all very charming, as well as some past members. It is clear that the support makes life less of a challenge for them. There is a team of dedicated Trustees along with volunteers and committed staff. Funding is a challenge and the group would always be glad of any help.

Sunday 9 June 2024 - Basingstoke Civic Service

We had the pleasure of representing Eastleigh at the Civic Service for Basingstoke and Deane to mark the installation of Councillor Dan Putty as Mayor. The service was personalised in that representatives of the community and of different faiths were invited to approach the Bishop and they pledged to support the new Mayor.

Following the service we were treated to tea and cakes and were able to meet Mayors from other boroughs along with fundraisers and civic leaders from Basingstoke.

Saturday 8 June 2024 - Unwrapped Festival Leigh Road Recreation Ground Deputy Mayor, Councillor Janice Asman

An amazing event, provided free and something for everyone. Live performances alongside have-a-go creative activities, craft and gift markets together with refreshments. After a warm welcome from Charlotte there was a Bubbles entertainment. Bubbles both large and small provided both by the professionals and members of the audience (again both big and small!) The very youngest especially, enjoyed Boxville Cardboard Adventures' performance and then loved creating their own works out of cardboard boxes. A lovely day out for everyone and many thanks for being invited. I will be certain to look out for up-coming events.

Thursday 6 June 2024 - D-Day 80th Anniversary Commemorations in Hamble

The day started with a coffee morning with a difference. The room included a display of model military aircraft and boats that were all in use during operation Neptune and Overlord. The models were provided by members of :-

Itchen Valley Flying Group
Romsey Electric Fryers Hampshire Model Flying Association
Eastleigh and District Model Boat Club

The modelers were able to provide historic context about the models and how they were used on the day of the invasion. Among the models was a scale model of HMS Loch Fada along with artifacts from the actual ship, this ship took part as anti-submarine patrols in the Bay of Biscay throughout the period of the landings.

Local schools attended and students were able to question the modelers about the history and were amazed to find that they were all fully function radio controlled models.

We were introduced to Fiona and Helen during the morning, suitably dressed in replica uniform and selling raffle tickets. With their guidance we were delighted to join those present, and enjoy coffee and cakes.

The evening commenced with a dinner where I was delighted to make the acquaintance of Gordon Craigen, Commadore of the Royal Southern Yacht Club along with his wife and the Vice-Commadore, Matthew Richardson. Following an evening festive board, along with the Lord Lieutenant's representative, we inspected the 14th Eastleigh Scout & Guide Band 'The Spitfires' as they marched past leading veterans, scouts, Army and Navy cadets who marched the full length of the Ropewalk to the Royal Southern Yacht Club.

There followed a service of remembrance lead by The Bishop of Southampton. The service included a moving reading of a contemporary report, delivered by Marion O'Malley, followed by a reading from the bible superbly delivered by Sarah Valleley, the Deputy Head of The Hamble School. Following the singing of the national anthem, the crowd were treated to Demian Smith playing bagpipes. He played the tunes played by William Millin on Sword Beach on D Day 1944 as troops stormed the beach, whilst I, as Mayor, had the honour of lighting the beacon located on the jetty. The service concluded with a reading by Deputy Lieutenant Jon Whitaker, followed by blessing by the Bishop.

During the day, I had the privilege of meeting a member whose son was a sadly killed in action in Afghanistan whilst serving in the British armed forces. This was a very contemporary reminder of the price of hostilities. Even if the pain of sorrow subsides, the heartache of loss will continue to weigh heavy on bereaved parents.

The service was followed by a community singalong organised by the Hamble Singers lead by Debbie who lead us through a series of wartime songs which was an excellent way to bring the event to an end.

