



MAYOR'S BLOG

July 2024

Monday 29 July - Skatejam

Freespace Skate Park

This was an amazing experience. We went there not knowing quite what we would see. Well we saw some local youngsters and even some young adults performing some spectacular jumps, spins, and flips on bicycles and skate boards as part of a competition.

The event was well organised and everyone had the necessary pads and helmets, but the truth is they almost never fell or stumbled. The Mayoress and I were absolutely enthralled with the skill and daring of the competitors.

There was a demonstration by a very experienced rider and it was the first time I ever saw a cyclist upside down and rotating. He seemed to defy gravity and land at will. Every photo failed, mostly because I was too shocked to press the button.

The competitors told me that this facility is one of the best in the area and that they travel many miles to practice here.

Sunday 28 July – Perfectly Imperfect Visit

Yonge Close

The Mayoress and I were delighted to join this community event that celebrated the beautification and pride in the Newtown area of Eastleigh. Perfectly Imperfect founder Karlie Smith organised the event. We started by admiring some innovative greening ideas on fences in the alleyways of Newtown. This is a project that upcycles pallets into vertical planters. These are very simple but incredibly effective. We then admired a post box topper produced by Chandler's Ford u3a. This celebrated the installation of swift boxes in the area. This is another brilliantly inventive way that the group have supported our community. The swift boxes are starting to attract birds, they prefer to live in groups and the local population is increasing.

We were then able to admire a 'Bug Hotel' made by Eden Harris, this was a superb example and will ensure that insects will have a place to flourish in the locality.

We then made our way to the main event where we admired the allotment name plate and a chance to meet the community. The Mayor was escorted around the gardens and then to the tombola stall by two young ladies, who then relieved me of some cash in exchange for 5 chances to win a prize.

We enjoyed refreshments along with pleasant conversation with the residents from all round the area.

Sunday 28 July – Eastleigh Armed Forces Veterans Breakfast Club

Katarina's, Eastleigh

Well this was certainly a treat - being invited out to eat a full English breakfast! The Mayoress also managed to enjoy a more restrained breakfast suitable for those with gluten intolerance. The food was delicious and after our feast we met everyone there and were invited back. The welcome was incredibly warm and we thoroughly enjoyed the event and will certainly join them again.

Huge thanks to Rose Timms and Dave Sillence, who work tirelessly to support veterans through the Breakfast Club. Rose also supports the Eastleigh, Chandler's Ford and District branch of the Royal British Legion as their Poppy Appeal Organiser.

The Armed Forces Breakfast clubs are for all members of the armed forces and veterans. They would be delighted to see new faces. For details of breakfast clubs across the Borough visit [Armed Forces Community Covenant | Eastleigh Borough Council](#)

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.

Saturday 27 July – Tanzanian Fusion Concert

St Martin in the Woods Church

This was a remarkable evening. The charity is supporting St Anne's Hospital in Liuli, Tanzania. We were greeted and introduced to many of the volunteers by the charity Chairman, Judith James, she has been championing the aid to St Anne's for 32 years.

Recently the charity has funded the usual essentials like bedding and equipment, and has also built a new toilet block, replaced a lot of the roof, and fitted solar panels and batteries. This will mean that the hospital has a more reliable power supply and reduce the energy costs considerably.

The evening started with us introduced to a choir from Liuli, there was a mixture of adults and children. They sang in their language and in English. They were of course, excellent, both in pitch and timing. They even smiled as the Chandler's Ford locals butchered their melodic dialect as we attempted to join in.

We were also treated to an organ recital by Hugh Benham and then to some folk music by George Wilson and "Shep". They were all absolutely brilliant.

You can support this cause by visiting <https://friends-of-st-annes.com/>.

Friday 26 July – Urban Beach Opening

Market Place, Eastleigh

We were delighted to be able to open the Urban Beach. This is provided by the Eastleigh BID (Business Improvement District) and is funded by town centre businesses to attract trade.

When we arrived there were a few youngsters looking at the beach and I was invited to cast the first sandcastle. I gave this my best shot and produced a castle that I thought looked good. Within seconds the beach was alive with children, one young man examined my efforts and was clearly unimpressed and put his foot firmly down and crushed it.

We then were taken to judge the teddy bears' picnic drawing competition. These have been on display at Oven Door Bakery. The selection of winners was not easy but we did eventually manage to complete the task.

We returned to the beach to find that the Em's Friendly Farm had arrived with sheep, goats, piglets and a pony. By now the area was teeming with youngsters and it was hard to know what was the more popular, the playground, the beach or the animal petting.

An absolute triumph.

Tuesday 23 July 2024 – Age Concern, Eastleigh AGM

Deputy Mayor

Age Concern, Eastleigh, invited me to attend and chair their Annual General Meeting. Cllr Wayne Irish welcomed all guests and members. These included Bridget Kandiah and Andrew Kandiah, the widow and son of the late and sorely missed Devan Kandiah, former chair, who died in May of this year.

At the close of the official business, Cllr Irish gave a moving tribute to Devan incorporating reference to the many and varied community and charitable works with which he had been involved.

In remembrance of Devan, the hall is to be named after him. A beautiful wooden sign, bearing his name, had been made. I presented the sign to Andrew who, along with his thanks, gave a personal reflection of his father's life.

After the meeting over a cup of coffee and cake, it was a great pleasure to chat with some of the volunteers, trustees and guests. I learned of the wide range of support services Age Concern offer to help improve the health wellbeing and quality of life of older people. They hold a variety of activities on a weekly and regular basis, some of which include a social tea dance,

Fitness and Friendship class, Quiz, U3A, Curling, Tai Chi and a Choir. I have been asked to say that if you, or you know of anyone that would benefit from attending any of these popular activities and services available, please call 02380 620275 or email info@aceastleigh.org.uk

Saturday 22 July – EGNA BBQ

Highbridge Farm

This visit was an absolute treat. The Eastleigh Gurkha and Nepalese Association hospitality was second to none. We were treated to a delicious traditional meal whilst listening to music. After lunch we were taken on a tour of the horticultural area that is used to grow many of the traditional vegetables and salad that make up the Nepalese cuisine. It is amazing what is being grown.

Afterwards we listened to traditional Nepalese singers followed by some party games. It's been some years since the Mayoress and I have played Musical Statues or Musical Chairs. This was followed by dancing until it was time to leave.

This was a fantastic event.

Sunday 21 July – Eastleigh Mela

Leigh Road Recreation Ground

This is where East joins with West and delivers one of the highlights of the year.

The event is best known for the incredible stage performances, but there are several additional performing areas where you can be entertained. Whilst checking out these performing areas we came across the Test Valley Art Foundation. We were amazed to hear what the group does and were then delighted to find that two of the girls taking part had made the Mayoress and I a crown each and we were duly crowned King and Queen of Eastleigh for the day.

The other part of the event is the food. Whatever your taste, you will find the finest examples available.

We were privileged to be able to make two awards to two recipients for services to the community from the Eastleigh Gurkha Nepalese Association.

Another fantastic Mela.

Saturday 21 July – New Music Makers Summer Festival Concert

Deputy Mayor accompanied by Catherine O’Dea

I had the great pleasure of visiting Hedge End Village Hall for the New Music Makers Choir Summer Festival Concert. On arrival I was warmly welcomed setting the tone for what was to be a memorable celebration of music and camaraderie.

The New Music Makers did not disappoint, delivering an enchanting performance that showcased their versatility and passion. Their repertoire spanned a delightful mix of genres, ensuring that there was something for everyone to enjoy. From the tunes of the 1920s to the hits of today, the choir’s selections included musicals, rock, pop, choral pieces and jazz that captivated the audience. Each song was performed with enthusiasm and skill, under the baton of their amazing conductor/musical director who also entertained us with her own solo song.

During the interval we enjoyed a classic treat of tea and cake, served to us by the hardworking members of the choir. It was a great chance to chat to both choir members and other members of the audience. From my conversations I rather gathered that the choir have quite a dedicated following who try hard not to miss any of their performances.

My heartfelt thanks to the New Music Makers Choir for their outstanding performance and to everyone involved in organizing this wonderful event.

Sunday 21 July – Opening of The Counselling Space

6 Pirelli Way, Eastleigh

The Counselling Space is a safe place that people can go to talk through Anxiety, Depression, Personal issues, Relationship problems and more. The environment is very relaxing and welcoming.

The Mayor and Mayoress were delighted to be asked to formally open The Counselling Space and wish Natalie Young and her team success.

Sunday 21 July 2024 – Celebrating 150 Years at St John's Church

Hedge End – Deputy Mayor

I very much enjoyed attending the 150th birthday celebration service at St John's Church in Hedge End. A significant milestone for the church but also a testament to Hedge End's enduring spirit and community.

Upon arrival I was greeted by Church Warden David and his wife Sally. Among the distinguished guests, were the Bishop of Winchester, The Rt Rev Philip Mountstephen and wife Ruth, also Paul Holmes MP and Cllr Cynthia Garton Chair of Hedge End West End and Botley Area Committee.

The church was beautifully decorated, with flowers and one of the most striking features was the sight of over 700 doves, handcrafted by the children of Hedge End, soaring through the church.

The service was conducted by the Vicar, Reverend Phil Aindow, whose heartfelt guidance throughout the ceremony was deeply appreciated by all attendees. A lovely service which managed to combine the traditional order of service with a modern influence. All joined in the hymns and songs with gusto. The Bishop delivered the sermon which offered both wisdom and hope as we celebrated this remarkable occasion. Much to the delight of the children and congregation alike the Bishop's friendly dog was in church.

The sense of community and mutual support was palpable. Unfortunately, due to prior commitments, I was unable to stay for the full day of celebrations. The planned festivities sounded truly delightful, featuring performances by the talented singer Maddie Thorp, the Salvation Army Band and the New Music Makers choir. Additionally a bouncy castle was set up for the children.

My thanks to Reverend Phil Aindow, Bishop Philip, David and Sally, the children and everyone at St John's Church for their warm welcome and for organising such a memorable celebration. Special thanks to the children whose creative efforts brought the church to life with their beautiful doves and to the volunteers and organisers who made this event possible.

Happy 150th Birthday, St John's Church! Here's to many years of faith, fellowship and service.

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Saturday 20 July - Who Cares? We Care

Fair Oak Village Hall

This was a very interesting visit. The event brought together all manner of care organisations that offer support to vulnerable people.

A lot of people attended and there were intense conversations going on all round the room. Even the exhibitors were busy networking.

It wasn't all about services, there was also information about activities and clubs, Women's Institutes, Walking Football, U3A to name but a few.

This event is well worth attending. If you need to find help you can use ConnectToSupportHampshire.org.uk this a one stop shop for help.

Friday 19 July – Annie

Thornden Hall

We had the pleasure of watching the musical “Annie” performed by the students of Thornden School. The whole production was excellent, and some stars of the future were strutting their stuff. The sets were extremely good and the standard was quite remarkable. The lighting and sound were all controlled by the school students as well. I didn’t find that out until the end, simply wouldn’t have known if I hadn’t been told.

If that wasn’t enough, at the end we were introduced to the school orchestra that had provided the music for the whole evening.

This was a very accomplished performance that was a credit to the school and the staff and helpers that coached and moulded the cast, orchestra and stage crew. Simply amazing.

Wednesday 17 July – Civic Award Ceremony

Fair Oak Infant School

This was a real pleasure. Our job was to present awards to 73 children who had completed a challenge to learn a skill, carry out a regular service, and take up a hobby. The challenge includes the commitment to carry on with the challenge objectives. The presentation was organised by Mr Peart, the Headteacher who rightly praised the winners and offered encouragement for others to meet the challenge next year.

Friday 12 July - Play “Dirty Dusting” performed by Hamble Players

Memorial Hall, Hamble

Upon arrival we were warmly greeted by the Director and other members of the theatre company. Their excitement and pride in showcasing their hard work were evident setting the tone for the evening.

As the lights dimmed and the curtain rose we and the audience were treated to a hilarious and engaging performance. The comedy was brilliantly executed by a cast of only four. It was very hard to believe we were watching an amateur production.

After the performance we had the opportunity to meet and congratulate the four cast members and to hear more about the “Players” future productions, including the company’s famous pantomimes.

There was a true community spirit to what was a delightful evening.

Friday 12 July 2024 - Southampton Youth Wind Band Summer Celebration Concert

Chandler's Ford Methodist Church

The Church was transformed into a concert venue by the Southampton Youth Band and then a brilliant evening's music was delivered. The band were at the end of the current year's performance calendar and this was the final performance with the band for some members as they move onwards to universities and career opportunities.

There are fresh members coming along to replace them. We were treated to a flute solo from Angela Pugh, she performed Madrigal by Gaubert and it was brilliant. Angela is a huge talent, and still only 10 years old!

A wonderful evening.

Friday 11 July 2024 - Norwood Primary & Pre-School Year 6 End of Term Production

This was an amazing performance, I kid you not, these kids can really sing and act. They performed Oliver, including all the big numbers. The costumes were mostly created by parents and the scenery was uncomplicated but very effective. If you ever get the chance to attend you really should. This performance was learned in just three weeks! They were, as far as I could tell, word perfect, and the singing was incredible, the younger years supported the year 11s by providing the choir, they too were fantastic. The volume and quality of the singing was remarkable.

The staff did an incredible job, can't wait to see the next production.

Saturday 6 July - Revelry on the Rec

Leigh Road Recreation Ground

On Saturday the 6th July, Leigh Road recreation ground became a time capsule. We had music from the 1940s, couples jive dancing, and topped off with three singers in period costume performing songs from that era. The crowd were enthralled.

Along with the music there was a display of vintage military vehicles. The Eastleigh and Southampton Armed Forces & Veterans Breakfast Clubs were in attendance and the Eastleigh Veterans Centre. These are charities that enable members of the armed forces and veterans to meet others and enjoy conversation and company, this is important to avoid loneliness and mental health issues.

We also met the Eastleigh Scouts at their stand, we were there just at the right moment as that was the moment we had a shower, so once again the Scouts were indeed prepared!

There were any number of food stalls, and dozens of small traders. The event transformed the town centre for the day to a festival atmosphere.

Huge success. Thank you to Dream Empire Events for organising it.

Friday 5 July 2024 - Duke of Edinburgh Gold Awards

The Great Hall, Winchester

A fabulous evening in the company of some amazing young adults. Every one of the recipients was there to receive their Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

There were 39 award winners being recognised for their outstanding efforts that were necessary to complete the challenge.

Each recipient was required to conquer new challenges in the following categories:

- Volunteering
- Mastering a new skill
- Completing a physical challenge
- Taking part in an expedition
- Completing a residential stay

Prior to the presentation we had the chance to meet and chat to the recipients and their families whilst enjoying a finger buffet and wine. We listened to the some fascinating accounts of how they accomplished the challenge.

We were also treated to a talk by a previous Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award winner Will King, he explained his personal journey after being awarded his Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. He is now the Senior Trainer for the RNLI at the Poole.

Monday 1 July 2024 - Royal British Legion Poppy Tea

Eastleigh Working Men's Club

The Event was well attended, mostly by poppy appeal volunteers but also by members of 1216 Eastleigh Squadron Air Training Corps.

Branch Chairman, Steve Little began with a short speech highlighting the achievements during the 2023 campaign. The branch raised a staggering £50,000 for the poppy appeal. Truly an enormous amount of money.

Whilst there I had the pleasure of presenting a "Local Hero Award" to Steve Forward who has served as the Parade Marshall for the Eastleigh Remembrance Parade for many years, in addition to his service to the County. He continues to serve as Branch Vice-Chairman and whilst passing the baton to a new Parade Marshall has pledged to support them at the remembrance service for this year.

Then followed a wonderful evening of music provided by Murielle, a French singer that entertained us during two sets. The intermission saw the refreshments unveiled and everyone enjoyed a buffet of finger food and cakes.

The Branch is looking to boost membership and would be pleased to hear from anyone who [would like to help](#), you don't need to have a military background to join.