

## **Mayor's Report to Wells City Council's Annual Parish Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024.**

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve as the 649<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Wells and I hope my enthusiasm, commitment and belief that the City Council can change people's lives for the better and the positive effects are being felt. It has certainly been a very busy and enjoyable time.

Whilst I have drawn on the experience I gained as a former Mendip District Councillor and Wells Central City Councillor it wasn't until I became Deputy Mayor, shadowing the incumbent Mayor Stewart Cursley, that I began to fully understand just what the role of Mayor involved and what I had let myself in for!

I would like to put on record my sincere thanks to Stewart who has been a fantastic mentor and role model. Along with his wife June, they have been exemplary in their support for me, helping me to understand what it means to be both a Mayor and a Mayoress.

As Deputy Mayor we shared a very busy calendar led by national events following the death of Queen Elizabeth II and Coronation of King Charles III in early May 2023. Working with Stewart and June and thanks to their kindness and inclusivity I was well prepared for my year in Office.

My time in Office has been guided by the following beliefs:

**"Everybody matters, everybody is important, and everybody should be listened to. No one needs to be lonely or homeless and we should respect everyone."**

I have been quoted as saying:

"No mission is too big or no problem too insignificant. No matter will be too small to deal with, the most important thing is that we listen, most people never listen, we need to acknowledge that everybody is important: that the people of Wells have a voice, and Wells City Council are willing to listen, even though we may have trouble finding the finance to be able to do it. We will be relentless in communicating with Somerset Council to get work done in Wells, like mending the paving stones on the pavements and ensuring the bins are emptied."

It is of critical importance to me at a time of reducing resources in local government that the issues that are closest to our local communities understands the needs of our constituents and is fully accessible to them. Everybody is important and everybody matters. It is important that the voices of all community members are heard and valued from the oldest to the youngest.

The Mayor's Parlour has played a small part in this increased approach to community engagement, working overtime to provide a base for tea, cake and communication. No matter how big or small the issue. Everybody is always welcome, and advice and signposting given when necessary.

This is why we need to have a Council that is open and diverse to all ages or genders. We are then more capable of making rounder decisions for the greater good of Wells.

### **Our beautiful natural and built environments need protecting and enhancing.**

Along with other Councillors, I have been pleased to support the Council's focus on Dark Skies and environmental sustainability. Together we have launched initiatives aimed at preserving Wells' natural beauty while promoting green practices among residents and businesses. With the help of the outside space team, we have attempted to improve our green public spaces and implemented sustainable waste management practices, thereby ensuring that Wells remains a beacon of environmental stewardship.

The Christmas lights and flower borders were a sight to be proud of. We have so much to thank for the work of the Outside Spaces Team.

I also love our amazing built environment from the Market Square ,the Cathedral and the Bishops Palace and am really pleased how we have been able to utilise these spaces and build stronger relationships with those responsible for their upkeep through my fund raising activities.

The Wells Ambassadors have played a massive part of my year in terms of helping both visitors and locals to understand what an amazing place we are and where important information can be found. Their good works need to be acknowledged.

I am also absolutely committed to recycling and up cycling but more of that later!

### **Local business matters**

Using my background in business I hope I have made businesses understand just how important they are not only in supporting the local economy but also providing services and goods that make living in the city such a special place.

It is good that we are gaining much wider recognition of our visitor Tourist Information Centre (TIC), but it is also important that we continue to support our local businesses in these difficult and unpredictable economic times.

I hope I have played a small part in fostering a supportive environment for entrepreneurs and an increase in small business ventures and local employment opportunities.

### **The Mayors new Clothes – Tanys Transformations**

It is not by accident that perhaps my year in office will be best remembered for The Mayor's new Clothes – Tanys Transformations and the events that have surrounded it.

I guess I have pushed the boundaries of the Mayor's key role in raising funds for local charity. Linking that to a commitment to 'everybody matters' and 'recycling', then I think we have got a winning formula which is promoted as 'Tanys Transformations'.

The upcycling of wedding dresses and the community collaboration and engagement that flows throughout the project has been a massive part of my work during my time as Mayor together with a full programme of events. Firstly, the dress launch on June 29<sup>th</sup>, then the Halloween quiz night, followed by the premier preview Cat Walk, then a second quiz night on Valentines weekend. The project is going from strength to strength due to the help of 1000 volunteers who have been involved to date and is shortly to be established as a Community Interest Company to sustain its work in the longer term.

I must give particular thanks to Councillor Jasmine Browne, the Mayor elect, who is supporting events that are planned beyond my term of office including a Gala Dinner in June and major Cathedral Cat Walk in August. Jasmine will be an amazing Mayor, who will put her own stamp on Wells.

On a final note, I must thank all Councillors who believed I could undertake this role and who have supported me in fulfilling my duties as Mayor. And last, but by no means least, I need to acknowledge and praise the Town Clerk, Steve Luck, and all the staff in the Town Hall who have been truly amazing and have embraced all my demands where possible and given me wise advice when best not to! Sadly, I must acknowledge we have had a couple of sad deaths within the council staff who are greatly missed. Also, we have had a couple of loyal long-standing members of staff retire through ill health. We wish them well and hope they have a very happy healthy future.

I recently received the following quote from the local press. If I have achieved just a small part of this I will be happy:

“Tanys Pullin, serving as the 649<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Wells, has distinguished herself through a commitment to community engagement and sustainable development. Her tenure is marked by a hands-on approach to leadership, prioritising accessibility to her constituents and championing initiatives that aim to enhance the quality of life in Wells. Her dress project has been a beacon of excellence, with the beautiful dresses great in the Cat Walk, mid-January. Tanys has a loyal group of volunteers who have made the exhibitions in Wells Cathedral, Bishops Palace and Museum a sight to behold showcasing the wealth of talent that exists within our community. The administration of this project has been expertly managed with a social media and website campaign to show everybody the wonderful work that has been achieved so far”

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has been involved in the Tanys Transformation project and the people who have guided me through my amazing year of being Mayor. <https://tanystransformations.co.uk/>

## **Key events**

30<sup>th</sup> May, fashion show supporting local business.

3<sup>rd</sup> June: Bath's Mayor Making.

5<sup>th</sup> June: HM Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mr Mohamed Saddiq, awards for excellence.

7<sup>th</sup> June, visit to Crandon Springs Care Home, Wells

14<sup>th</sup> June, Supporting Catch the Bus initiative.

19<sup>th</sup> June: Attending Oliver at Wells Cathedral School.

26<sup>th</sup> June: Axbridge Mayor Making followed by the celebration of the Maces in the museum

29<sup>th</sup> June, Lunch of Tanys Transformations, the Mayor's New Clothes

June, Wells Environmental network.

June: Open Day at Heads Up

2<sup>nd</sup> July: Romulus and Remus

2<sup>nd</sup> July, Inauguration of Yeovil Mayor

July: Cathedral School Speech Day.

6<sup>th</sup> July, Art Review and A Level exhibition at the Blue School

6<sup>th</sup> July, Blue School Summer Music Concert

7<sup>th</sup> July: Opening of Charlton House, Montego Resorts

7<sup>th</sup> July, Priddy Folk Festival

9<sup>th</sup> July, Wells in Bloom School presentations for decorative Wheelbarrows

9<sup>th</sup> July, As You Like It, open-air theatre club

9<sup>th</sup> July, Visit from the Mayor or Cairn regarding the Blessing of the waters of Wells.

18<sup>th</sup> July, The Hare and Tortoise, motorbike rally

30<sup>th</sup> July, celebration of the ambassadors of Wells and The Talk by Helen McCann about her book, running, blind and cold

6<sup>th</sup> August, raising awareness of Hiroshima at the Nuclear Disarmament Peach Group

10<sup>h</sup> August, Opening the flower festival in the Bishop's Palace

20<sup>th</sup> August, talk at, making spaces. River blessing in Glastonbury with all the Mayors and chairs the local area attending.

28<sup>th</sup> August: Wells Moat Boat Race

2<sup>nd</sup> September, hosting the Mummers of Wells, Morris Dancing and attending a Wells Football match.

2<sup>nd</sup> September, attending a contemporary art exhibition

3<sup>rd</sup> September, Glastonbury Mayor Making, Indra Donfrancesco

8<sup>th</sup> September: Represented Wells with a visit to Bad Durkheim

12<sup>th</sup> August, Opening Wells railway fraternity exhibition

17<sup>th</sup> September, Battle of Britain event followed by the premier at the Cedars Hall of the Pianist

30<sup>th</sup> September, Mayors meeting at the Top of the Tor in Wedding Dresses.

7<sup>th</sup> October, Sew and Sew in the Town Hall

8<sup>th</sup> October, Attending Wells Food Festival, and found she was very good at spinning plates.

9<sup>th</sup> October, County Awards, where Wendy Ray received an award for service to the Community.

14<sup>th</sup> October, Wells in Bloom

18<sup>th</sup> October, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucestershire Visited the Wells Arms Houses.

Late October, Halloween Quiz night

November, Hosted the Twining weekend in November with representatives from Paray-le-Monial, France, Bad Dürkheim, and Fontanellato,

December: Multiple Concerts in the Cathedral

January 2024: Met Queen Camilla, in London Guild Hall

January 2024: Civic Awards, Mayor's Award. Dawn Payne was recognized for her hard work for Wells Twinning, Maurice Day for his dedication to Wells Carnival

Thanks go to Kevin Westwood and Nick Marshman, who both retired in 2023 after many years of service at Wells City Council.

Cllr Tanys Pullin

649<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Wells

Feb 2024