

Mayor's Report to Wells City Council Annual Parish Meeting

It has been an absolute privilege to serve the City of Wells as Mayor 2024-2025

The area of focus for my year was to champion the young people of our City. I began by appointing two Mayor's Cadets from 1955 City of Wells Royal Air Force Cadets, and chose Wells Scouts as my Mayor's Charity. The Cadets and Scouts have worked alongside me this year to raise their profile in the City and have attended Civic events and fundraising events. The Cadets accompanied the Mayor at VE Day Commemorations, Remembrance Sunday Events and the Battle of Britain Commemoration and carried the Mayor's wreath to pay respects on behalf of the people of the City of Wells. They were a credit to the city and to their Cadet Corps. I have also worked with the St. John's Ambulance Cadets, Wells Youth Club and children from both Wells Secondary Schools and primary schools in Wells and surrounding areas. I invited young people from age 8-16 as representatives of our young community to 4 Council meetings to speak about their lives in our City and what is important to them. To follow this up, I organised a Youth Question Time to mark UK Parliament week in which 32 students from the Blue School and Wells Cathedral School asked questions of a panel of Wells City Councillors, Somerset Councillors and the MP for Wells. I am currently in talks with the schools to start a Wells City Youth Council to ensure the voices of our young people are heard.

I have attended many services at the Cathedral and our Parish Church of St. Cuthbert's School. With my Consort, I was invited to be a part of the ceremony of the Installation of the new Dean of Wells, The Very Revd Toby Wright and welcomed him on behalf of the City of Wells. We also went to the Installation of the new Cathedral Precentor, Reverend Timothy Stevens and the Mayor was invited to be part of the welcome party for the HRH The Duchess of Edinburgh when the Drakensburg Choir from South Africa sang with the Wells Cathedral School Choristers.

Our Community in Wells has continued to astonish me with their spirit and generosity. Christmas was a busy time for me attending 20 services and concerts but one of the highlights must have been the Community Christmas Gathering in the Town Hall on Christmas Eve when people from our city anonymously donated bags of presents and stockings for people on their own over the Christmas period. The Mayor and Councillors provided a buffet and drinks and a party with local school children singing carols to entertain everyone! The Mayor's Christmas card competition was open to all Wells Junior Schools and two winners were chosen to have their designs printed on cards to be sent all over the world with a book token and tea in the Mayor's Parlour as their prize!

The Mayor rowed in the Moat Boat Race (a lot of fun and highly recommended!), joined in the fun run, the lantern parade and was lucky enough to be part of the Wells City Carnival parade, the Wells Literature Festival, Wells Food Festival, Wells Theatre Festival and Wells Comedy Festival, Wells Pride, Wells Contemporary Arts Exhibition, the Wells Italian Festival and many more amazing community events. I am so grateful to live in a City where there is so much to do and so much to take part in! I was invited as a guest of Glastonbury, Street, Axbridge and Bath and enjoyed the partnerships with our neighbouring communities. The Mayor also very much enjoyed the links we have with our twin and partner cities and visited Bad Durkheim, Klugsbork and has plans to travel to Fontenallato. It has been a

pleasure to meet and work with the Mayors and Councillors of our friendship cities/towns and we were made very welcome. Each Mayor received a hamper of local produce all from Wells and independent businesses here in our City.

The Mayor's chosen Charity for this year has been the refurbishment of the 5th/7th Wells Scout Group. The Mayor's Concert raised almost £3,000 and other donations have now topped £11,000. An anonymous donation of an undisclosed amount was also sent to the Town Hall for the Mayor's Charity. The fundraising continues with a Mayor's Quiz Night to be held in the Town Hall on Saturday 15th March. The final cheque will be presented to the Scouts at their Community Day on 26th April.

The devolution of services from Somerset County Council to Wells City Council began in earnest this year and has just culminated with the agreement to transfer the control of the Market to Wells. It will be overseen by the new Town Clerk, Haylee Wilkins who was appointed by Wells City Council to succeed Steve Luck after 28 years of service.

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, the Town Clerks (both outgoing and incoming), the Council Officers and staff, especially Sue Glendinning for all their hard work and my family, my Consort, Bill, the Mayor's Chaplain, Sam Denyer, Town Crier, Len Sweales, Mayor's Mace Bearer, Colin Price and Council Mace Bearer, Graham Woodland, Deputy Mayor Louis Agabani, Lord Lieutenant of Somerset, Mohammed Saddiq, Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Somerset, Ted Allen, Dean of Wells, Toby Wright and the High Sheriff of Somerset, Rob Beckley for their endless support and encouragement.

Councillor Jasmine Browne
650th Mayor of Wells
February 2025