

MAYORS ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019

It has been an honour and a privilege to be Mayor this year and will leave me with many unforgettable memories. It has been inspiring to see the work of our many volunteers across the district, the many community groups I've visited as well as people providing entertainment and they all brighten up our lives.

Attending so many events wouldn't have been possible without the tireless organising of Jenny – who took on the challenge of managing my diary and Chris who got me places and often had to round me up at the end – as I like to chat. I'd like to thank my Deputy Mayor Claire Cozler who stepped in to cover some events enthusiastically for me.

Hearing people's story was the big bonus and I was particularly moved, at the Poverty Truth Commission to hear people's voices about their personal experience of poverty. It was heartening to hear of the work at Morecambe Food bank and give out volunteer awards. Attending the Prince's Trust Award showed how the courses gave some vulnerable young people confidence to start employment or college.

Highlights for me were visiting Almere with our Youth Games team. The team competed valiantly in a heat wave, and the culture team also put on a stunning production of West Side story. I was shown an amazing project the Dutch were building a whole ecological garden city – giving us a glimpse of how urban design with a low carbon footprint could be done here as well.

Attending the 100th year commemorations of the First World War culminating in Remembrance Day, was a time to reflect on the enormous sacrifice locally ordinary men and women made in the war. A time to reflect and judging the school poetry competition on the theme illustrated both the courage and the horror of it all.

Attending volunteer awards at St John's Hospice showcased the fantastic work around the hospice and fundraising.

St John's Hospice and City of Sanctuary were my two chosen charities. I thank all who helped run the BBQ at Clavor Hill, the Halloween music night at the Alhambra and the recent quiz night at the Town Hall.

Though it was an honour to speak at Lancaster Pride event in my first week, I found myself on stage, before a large crowd in carnival mode and appearing between 2 pop bands and an Elton John tribute act. It felt like a baptism of fire, everyone was so friendly, yet no-one danced or heard of the Tom Robinson band !

At Lancaster Food Sustainability Forum, I learnt the value of networking between local community food growing projects and food bank and food club providers. I enjoyed attending several Open Days at Clavor Hill food growing project, Laurel Bank nursing home (where I danced with the residents!), the RNLI and Friends of the RLI – not to be confused.

I hosted a Civic tour for other Lancashire Mayors who seemed impressed visiting the Halton Co-housing Project.

I enjoyed meeting students at Beaumont College. They did a really positive play about their identity.

As part of the Council's mission to reduce single use plastic, I judged a competition by schoolchildren to design posters to promote the message.

Finally I wish the Mayor Elect Cllr David Whittaker every success next year – and good luck !