

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT – 5 Dec 23

Thursday 2 Nov 23

Mr David Cumming had for many years been a familiar sight on both Civic Sunday and Remembrance Sunday being the well-respected and highly-efficient town Parade Marshal. News of his recent death had been received with great sadness and his funeral, at Stafford Crematorium, was attended by a huge number of relatives and friends including the Mayor and Mayoress. David had been a Grenadier Guardsman and a member of the Regimental Band had travelled from London to sound Last Post. The service was, very appropriately, conducted by the Mayoress in her role as a Reader in the Joint Benefice of St Michael and St Wulfad, Stone, with Aston, St Saviour.

Saturday 11 Nov 23

On a sunny autumn day, the one hundred and fifth anniversary of the Armistice which ended the First World War was marked by a well-attended ceremony at the War Memorial in Granville Square. The Town Mayor laid a wreath on behalf of the Town.

Sunday 12 Nov 23

In marked contrast to the day before, Remembrance Sunday was wet and windy. However, the bad weather did not deter the steadfast people of the wide Stone community from marking this solemn occasion with the usual vast numbers both at Walton and at the War Memorial in Granville Square. Fortunately, the rain had eased by the time the Mayor alongside the Deputy Lieutenant laid the first wreaths. These were followed by over seventy further wreaths. The occasion was continued in the Church of St Michael & St Wulfad and concluded with a Reception in the Frank Jordan Centre. Our current Parade Marshal, Mr Ivan Prescott, conducted the event with the excellence of his late predecessor, Mr David Cumming.

Monday 13 Nov 23

Earlier in the year the Town had marked the eightieth anniversary of the death in a wartime flying accident of one of Stone's heroes of World War 2, Flight Lieutenant 'Dick' Stubbs, DFC DFM. Mrs Amy Graham, Headteacher of Christchurch First School, invited the Mayor, accompanied by the Mayoress, to give a talk to the Year 4 children on the subject. Both the children and their teachers were fascinated and inspired by the exploits of 'Dick' Stubbs, who had lived on Northesk Street along from the school. Also, it was evident that the Heritage Centre, when it opens, will provide our schools with an extremely valuable educational resource.

Friday 17 Nov 23

It is always interesting to visit our neighbouring towns and to support the switching on of their Christmas lights. This year's event in Uttoxeter was well supported and the Town Mayor found it very illuminating.

Tuesday 21 Nov 23

Scouting and Guiding have both been very strong in Stone and its wide community, and it was a pleasure for the Mayor to join other civic heads at the Girlguiding Staffordshire County HQ, Hixon, for the Staffordshire Girlguiding Annual Review. The work and achievements of the organisation

over the past year, not least from the Stone area, were remarkable and worthy of high praise. The Mayor also took the opportunity to promote the valuable work of the Stone Scout and Guide Band.

Thursday 23 Nov 23

The annual switch-on of the Stone Christmas Lights is one of the most popular events of the year and 2023 was no exception despite the weather having a resemblance to that suffered on Remembrance Sunday. Kath Stanway was an enthusiastic compere of the event and the performance of the massed schools choirs under the inimitable leadership of Sue Campbell-Kelly was brilliant. The event concluded with the Mayor, joined by the three children who had won the Christmas card competition, turning on this year's excellent lights, all the while with Father Christmas supervising from stage right.

Sunday 26 Nov 23

In the morning the Mayor and Mayoress had been invited to the Crown Wharf Taphouse to start the annual 5 kilometre 'Turkey Trot' fun run and to award medals and prizes. A large and splendidly costumed array of runners and accompanying dogs took part in a hugely enjoyable event which was in support of the Crown Wharf Theatre which we hope to see opening in the New Year.

The Mayor and Mayoress then travelled to Beacon Barracks, MoD Stafford, for the Army Benevolent Fund annual Curry Lunch. The event was very well attended by numerous supporters including civic heads from as far away as Walsall. A cheque for £5,000 was presented to the Fund.

DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT – 5 Dec 23

Saturday 11th November 2023

It was an honour for the Deputy Mayoress and I to join the gathering at Stone's cenotaph to commemorate the Armistice. The event was, as usual, well attended and well organised.

Sunday 12th November 2023

The Deputy Mayoress and I were equally honoured to attend the Remembrance Sunday event. Despite a dire weather forecast the people of Stone congregated in considerable numbers to pay their respect to the fallen at the cenotaph and, later, at the Church of St Michael and St Wulfad. The parade, wreath laying and church service were well organised and a fitting tribute.