

TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 3 March 2026

Friday 5th December 2025 – Stone Scout Group Christmas Performance

The Stone Scout Group performed some lovely nativity and carol songs at Saint Michael's. It was entertaining to see the parents and leaders allowing just the right amount of mischief to ensure that the scouts (as well as those in the audience) had big grins on our faces! Some of the choir performances were very beautiful and a reminder of how much children love and anticipate Christmas. Matthew, the organist, was very patient and accommodating when the youngsters wanted to have a look at the organ towards the end. I was glad to see other guests in attendance and to speak with many of the proud parents after the performance.

Sunday 7th December 2025 – Stone Civic Carol Service

I had the great pleasure of attending St Michael's again for this year's Civic Carol Service. I took the opportunity to thank our community for making it the "happiest town in Staffordshire" and for all of the wonderful work of our church groups, volunteer organisations, families, and individuals. It was wonderful to hear the organist play "I Saw Three Ships". My favourite Christmas instrumental. Civic guests from around the area came together, and I was grateful to be so well supported and I look forward to seeing them at their respective events over the Christmas period. A wonderful event towards the end of a wonderful year for Stone and our warm community.

Wednesday 10th December 2025 – Stone Stroke Club Christmas Party

I had the nice opportunity to visit Little Stoke Cricket Club for a drink and nibbles with the Stone Stroke Club. I was greeted by the service users and thought I would be enjoying a couple of quiet Christmas Carols. By the second song the whole room was roaring Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer with actions too! I really appreciated their lively personalities and ended up staying much longer than I had originally expected!

Thursday 11th December 2025 – Stone Choral Society Christmas Concert

The Stone Choral Society have become my "new favourite band" this year. Having seen them twice prior, I am always impressed at how quickly they can turn around and perform new material with such polish and professionalism. The Crown Wharf Theatre was the perfect venue for their wonderful acoustics, and I was greeted with kindness once more. It is always great to see a sell out at the wharf. This shows the popularity of our new venue, as well as our quality performers and social clubs in the area. An immaculate performance with the assistance of the "Acceler8" band who put their own flair and spin on some Christmas classics.

Sunday 14th December 2025 – Ashbourne Christmas Concert

Sarah and I visited St Oswald's "Cathedral" Church in Ashbourne and were blown away by the magnitude and splendour, all lending themselves very well to the acoustics of the event. The choir were a wonder to behold, and the mayor of Ashbourne, Caroline was kind enough to bake the mince pies provided for the event by herself. Great company, wonderful venue, and some lovely home baking. We hope to come back to Ashbourne in the future to see the Church again.

Tuesday 16th December 2025 – Cannock Christmas Concert

The Cannock Christmas Concert was as enjoyable as the event at Ashbourne. The guests were welcomed with mulled wine, cake, mince pies, and many familiar civic guests met with cheer after the concert. I must say that I finally managed to adjust to the chorus of Ding Dong Merrily on High without completely embarrassing myself! Great fun all round!

Thursday 18th December 2025 – Alzheimer's Club Christmas Party

Sandy welcomed myself and the Deputy Mayor for a served buffet lunch with wine, song, and a raffle. The club members were all thrilled to be able to have an early Christmas with friends that they have made there. This organisation is a gem of the community and is extremely well subscribed - a testament to how well the club is run. I heard many attendees complimenting the team, and I was grateful to spend the afternoon in good company.

Wednesday 24th December 2025 – Advent Calendar Windows

The final window was revealed at Christ Church with a huge crowd, and an open door for coffee, biscuits, mince pies, and Christmas cheer. Familiar faces and new were all around and it was the culmination of a very successful advent. The volunteers from Christ Church have set a real trend, and I have been glad to enjoy several, though not all, of the window openings throughout the festive season. I have even heard that other towns have begun to copy us! A fine accolade indeed, and it is glad to think that our carols and art projects from local schools have inspired joyous events in towns further afield. The volunteers are a credit to the atmosphere of the town and contribute to the anticipation and build up to the big day!

Thursday 25th December 2025 – St Mary's Care Home

Sarah and I were pleased to spend some time with the residents, families, and carers at St Mary's Care Home on Christmas Morning. The warm welcoming atmosphere was felt by all with wonderful decoration and Christmas spirit in the room. We were even offered Baileys! A true pleasure to share the company of those who give their Christmas day in service to others, and to meet some of our towns elders. We left before dinner was served, though it was an inspiration to see how effortlessly the carers kindled the high spirits and sense of excitement for the afternoon ahead. I spoke with one resident saying "How wonderful it is to see the great effort that has been made by the carers", and they responded very matter of factly; "They are like this EVERY day." Wonderful to hear, and it put us in a great mood for the rest of the Christmas afternoon!

Monday 19th January 2026 – Formal Opening of the Stafford Crown Court

Stafford's Court Opening was a real insight into our country's traditions as it pertains to the judiciary. It was wonderful to see The High Sheriff, Tim Gillow, and learn a little more about the historic role of High Sheriff and the St Mary's Church's place within the criminal justice system in ages past. This was the first event of this kind that I had attended, though I was glad to see some familiar faces as the High Sheriffs from other counties were in attendance too. We all had a small tour of Saint Mary's afterwards and I was interested to discover that "The Compleat Angler" by Isaac Walton is the world's third most widely printed book! I thank the High Sheriff for the kind invitation.

Saturday 24th January 2026 – Staffordshire Moorlands Chairman's Burns Night

Adam and Katrina were full of their characteristic energy and kindness in welcoming Sarah and I to their Burns Night celebration. As a vegetarian, I have always found Haggis gruesome, nevertheless, this celebration was certainly a lovely opportunity to experience a little bit of Scottish history and tradition from the comfort of our own county! All in attendance were full of energy during the Scottish dancing, and it was great fun wearing a kilt along with many other civic guests and attendees. The food was lovely too - Haggis was not mandatory!

Wednesday 28th January 2026 – Reverend Robert Icke's Collation Service at St Michael's

Members of the community gathered together at St Michael's and St Wulfad's Church to welcome the new rector to our town. It was interesting to see the ceremonial elements of this larger event for the church, and it was pleasant to welcome the Bishop of Lichfield. The buffet afterwards ensured a warm welcome from members of the church and the wider community. The buffet was extremely well provisioned and plentiful with each member of the congregation bringing their own

contributions. A lovely gesture for our new rector, and I look forward to getting to know him better and seeing him in our town. The Deacons have served us beautifully this year for our civic events, and it is nice to know that Reverend Robert will be well supported by their ongoing proficiency.

Wednesday 4th February 2026 – Stafford Borough Quiz

Borough Mayor and Consort, Jenny and Ray Barron invited me to the Mayor's Parlour for refreshments prior to a wonderful pub quiz style event in the Council Chambers. It was lovely to see familiar faces as well as to enjoy a private historical tour of the chamber beforehand. The comradery between Stafford and Stone has been a true highlight of the mayoral year, and I look forward to seeing some of the attendees at my quiz event later this month.

Monday 9th February 2026 – "Pitch to the Panel" - Young Enterprise

I was welcomed at the Chamber of Commerce in Festival Park to meet high school students from the surrounding area. Six participating schools were in attendance including our Alleyne's students. Each group learned about entrepreneurship, business, marketing, and project management skills to develop a project that would be a viable business opportunity. I was glad to see the culmination of their hard work, and went to ask them some questions about their projects and other avenues to consider for their projects. Students were courteous, insightful, and very professional. Teresa Fisher hosted me, and I was impressed by how many hats she wears in service to our town and wider area. I look forward to seeing them in Stone high street on the 21st.

Thursday 12th February 2026 – Stone Town Quiz Evening

Jonathan Powell was the star of the show hosting this year's pub quiz event at the Frank Jordan Centre. Great entertainment throughout! A night of relaxed entertainment and brain teasers in a sellout event with many in attendance requesting more similar events in the future! A definite consideration for next year's town mayor, as we managed to raise roughly £800 on the night through ticket sales and the raffle. Sir Gavin Williamson kindly assisted me in selling the raffle tickets, and I was grateful to the deputy mayor, consort, and friends for ensuring that we did not come last!

Saturday 14th February 2026 – Stone Lions Club Annual Dinner

Sarah and I were absolutely blown away at the hard work that the Lions clubs are involved in, and discovered the international nature of the organisation - spanning over 200 countries. The Lions clubs and community groups from Stone and the surrounding area enjoyed a wonderful opportunity to dine together and raise more funds in the raffle. We were extremely grateful to have been invited, and I was inspired by the amount of time, money, and energy that goes into supporting our community locally, as well as hearing about the work of other groups within the county. This organisation is a real blessing to our town, and we were impressed by the years of dedication from some of the members. We even won some prizes on the very generously provisioned raffle!

Saturday 21st February 2026 – Young Enterprise

On Saturday the 21st I went to support the students from around the wider area with their project showcases on the market stall in Stone High Street. It was a privilege to present certificates for the students projects and start-up business ideas that the high school students had developed during their project.

DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS – 3 March 2026

Christ Church Advent Window Openings

The Deputy Town Mayor attended a number of Advent Window Openings during December 2025.