

Good evening and welcome to Northam town council's annual electors meeting. Tonight we are also pleased to be presenting cheques to our grant recipients to enable them to carry on with their Stirling work within the community.

I'm going to give you a brief overview of the achievements of the town council during 21/22. I have been proud to work as your Mayor with Jane Mills, our Town clerk a team of dedicated staff within the office and our out and about ~~in~~ our community maintenance team. The members, especially the chairs of the committees have worked cohesively to achieve the delivery of projects and benefits for the community.

This year we issued to every household our new annual newsletter. The glossy magazine style proved popular and the feedback has been extremely positive.

2021/2022 continued to challenge us all with the COVID pandemic, but we soldiered on and delivered the first community bus service following a circular route from Northam to Westward ho to Appledore, on Wednesdays and Sundays. This was named the pot

walloper and was funded by our allocation of the governments welcome back fund. 1800 passengers used this service during the six week summer holiday. Moving on we decided to extend the community bus service to transport people to the Appledore monthly market held on a Saturday.

The welcome back fund also contributed towards Appledore's incredible knitted Christmas tree project which was much admired by large numbers of visitors to Appledore during the Christmas holidays.

We had a day trip to Exeter on the 4th of December by coach. The passengers enjoyed their capital city, the cathedral the Christmas market and the shops.

Stepping back a few months, a major achievement for the council was the completion of the children's play park in westward ho. This fantastic installation proved an instant hit and was officially opened by Paw Patrol at the Party in the park on the 6th of November. This party attracted large crowds of supporters with a free barbecue, ice cream donated by hocking's ice creams and soft drinks by Rob Braddick and to meet our plastic free status Andrew Cross donated biodegradable cups for the hot drinks. We were entertained by Appledore Band, exmoor Zoo and a very tolerant owl, an incredible stunt display

compered by our own resident master of ceremonies Pete Sawyer.

The welcome back fund has also provided the finance of additional planters in all three villages these have now been purchased and will be planted out in red, white and blue colours this year for the Queens jubilee.

Funding was also available for benches for the park and the promenade green, monies were made available for painting the sea wall

Another project that we have completed this year has been the installation of bridges on the Burrows which means that we now have a circular walk from Appledore to westward ho without getting your feet wet animals can also use these crossings which prevents them getting stuck in ditch's.

Carrying on with the theme of the parks it's not just westward Ho that has benefited but Anchor park and Lords Meadow Park have both enjoyed planting programmes trees shrubs and bulbs. Lords Meadow has also seen a significant project of surfacing around play equipment resulting in a far less muddy experience on a wet day, also Lords Meadow has been the recipient of the outdoor gym equipment to be installed shortly, relocated from Burroughs farm.

The council declared a climate emergency and set about creating a strategy to significantly reduce the communities carbon footprint and to achieve carbon 0 on its own properties by 2030.

Bike racks have been installed throughout our council area to encourage this mode of transport.

A rainwater harvesting system has been installed at Northam hall to enable water to be used for the planters in the villages.

The next project will be the installation a photovoltaic cells on the roof of the Hall, this work has been commissioned and will shortly be undertaken.

A small but not insignificant decision was taken to reduce the use of paper and postage with agendas now being printed online rather than being dispatched to every councillor.

Last year I spoke to you all about the speed watch campaign that was being led by councillor Sargent and a group of volunteers. The pandemic delayed the training required but finally I can announce that our speed watch has commenced and will be extended to further approved areas for the monitoring of cars and lorries using the highway. At our last council meeting it was agreed to make an application for 20 mph restrictions in locations where children and the

elderly appear to be at risk. This is a new scheme that Devon County Council have decided to support in this coming year. we will inform you of the outcome of our application.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

The opening of the new Burrows centre where Councillor Laws, Chair of the Burrows Committee, was invited to speak by Torridge District Council during the ceremony. A splendid asset for the community and our tourists.

On the 26th of January Northam town council welcomed a newly elected councillor Mrs Carrie Woodhouse Representing Northam ward.

Full council also welcomed Tom Hart, general manager of Harland and Wolff who spoke to us about the ambitions of the shipyard at Appledore and its promising future it aspires to extend the workforce and has already created apprenticeships. Mr Hart pledged to return to a future council meeting to inform us of the progress being made.

The Introduction Ceremony of the mayor of Northam was delayed until September, almost six months after their term of office began. It was a splendid evening and thanks for giving to the retiring mayor David Chalmers, and presentations were made to the

retiring Beadle. The mayor's cadet, Shayla Webster was handed the baton by the outgoing cadette.

We have been busy planning for events to celebrate a return to normal but at times COVID still seems to impact upon our plans. The platinum jubilee of Her Majesty the queen, comes with a catalogue of protocols to follow to ensure that every town and village celebrate at the same time on each of the days in June. It has been decided that northam town council will light a beacon on the top of bone hill on the 2nd of June at 9:45 pm. Accompanying this lighting we hope to have a community choir singing the specially composed anthem to celebrate the 70 years. This choir will be meeting on the 25th of April at 7:00 PM at the town hall to get to know one another and to see the lyrics and to hear the music everyone is invited to attend the only criteria as you must love to sing!

Northam town council has also decided to mark the occasion of the jubilee by presenting every school child at Appledore, Saint Mary's, St Margaret and St. Georges with a Balmoral medal on a red, white and blue ribbon.

I must remind you all about the Mayfair this year promises to be bigger and better than ever after an absence of two years. This will be held on Saturday the 30th of April. The May Fair is traditionally always held on the first May Day bank holiday weekend. We look forward to meeting dinosaurs, listening to the SAMBA BAND, visiting a vast array of stalls, watching Punch and Judy and enjoying Exmoor Zoo's. Plenty to do for all the family and there will be many outlets providing food and drink. We look forward to seeing you all there and I have ordered fine weather for the occasion. Please pick up a programme.

Congratulations this year go to Tina Tucker who was appointed as an administrative assistant at the conclusion of her apprenticeship. We've also appointed one new temporary member for the maintenance team to assist with the increased workload that the summer season brings. Last year we had only just welcomed our new Deputy Town Clerk, Guy Langton but as he has celebrated his first 12 months with us, I know Jane, Pat, Tina and the entire Council would like to express our thanks for his help with the delivery of an extensive work programme. In fact I think they all deserve a round of applause

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It has been a year of highs and lows, lockdown's and mask wearing, vaccinations and personal losses.

I am grateful for the support that you gave to my charity bingo night which raised £500 pounds.

Normally there would have been other events to support these charities but regrettably this has not been possible. If you wish to support the North Devon Hospice or the Bideford college opportunities fund there will be a collection box as you leave, thank you.

I could not have achieved this year without the great support of my Deputy mayor Councillor Laws, who has kept a weather eye on me and has encouraged me to carry on, in fact the entire Northam team have been supportive, even when I get carried away with new ideas!

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