

Following Councillor Purser stepping down from Mayor in August 2023, I was asked to step in for the remainder of the term. This was mainly due to the recent election and addition of new Councillors, and having the ability to hit the ground running immediately.

Like all previous terms, it was again a privilege to be elected as the Mayor of March for the year of 2023/2024.

As in previous years, I was fortunate to be able to attend some great events in this nine-month term.

The first task in my term was organising the VIP attendees and area for the MAFF. This was another great event and very well attended by both the public and VIPs from other towns and cities.

Mid-September I attended the Civic Service for Ramsey, along with my deputy Cllr Christy. This is always a lovely town and venue to attend.

We were able to attend the Civic Service for Whittlesey at the beginning of October, and I held my first fund-raising event on Sunday 29th October, with afternoon tea at March Golf Club. A huge amount of funds were raised at this event and I very much appreciated everyone's support for the event.

Unfortunately, due to low numbers, the MTC Civic Service had to be postponed to 2024 when more attention could be given to organising the event.

Ian and I were honoured to attend Madingley's Remembrance Service at the American Cemetery on the 10th November. It was a beautiful service and surroundings.

On the morning of the 11th November, I laid a wreath on behalf of the town at St Peter's Church, where we had a small service.

On the afternoon of the 11th November, we had the honour of hosting the High Sherrif of Cambridgeshire. The Exchange Tea Parlour put on a lovely spread and we had a small gathering where Dr Bharatkumar Khetani and his wife Pritty presented a number of High Sherrif Awards.

The town also welcomed back the MTC Remembrance Parade on Sunday 12th November. It was slightly different this year due to the regeneration works in Broad Street, but it was very well attended.

Sunday 17th of December I held the Mayor's Carol Service, which again as very well attended.

Ian and I were invited to the 1220 Air Cadets Presentation evening at St Wendredas Church on the 26th January. It was lovely to see so many cadets take part in so many competitions across the county.

Generally, January was a quiet month as we were gearing up for the Mayor's Charity Ball on Friday 9th February. We had 150 attend the evening and a huge sum of money was raised for the Mayor's Charities. Thank you to all those that attended and contributed to the evening.

I held the MTC Civic Service on Sunday 3rd March at St Mary's Church. It was a lovely service headed by Rev Andrew Smith. It was pleasing to see so many visitors from outside of March attend.

Thursday 7th March I was invited to All Saints School by Cllr Hannah Orbell for World Book Day. Gosh - it was brilliant to see so many children dress up and tell the audience which books they enjoyed reading and who they were dressed as.

On Friday 8th March I had the honour of attending the International Women's Day event at Neale-Wade Community College. This was led by Rev Ruth Clay of St Wendredas Church and Karen Beckwith of the March Rotary Club. More than 150 delegates attended and it was a very inspirational day.

Saturday 23rd March, we attended the Whittlesey Charity dinner and had the pleasure of the company of some other visiting Mayors and Chairs. I understand Cllr Mayor raised a huge sum for her charities.

On Friday 5th April, Ian and I were able to visit the 1220 Air Cadets at their squadron parade evening. Here we gained a better understanding of what the cadets have been up to and the awards they have gained. We presented them with a cheque from the Mayor's Charity. They said that the funds would allow them to purchase additional IT equipment to aid their assessments and courses required, plus some new equipment too.

Saturday 13th April Ian and I attended the Godmanchester Civic Service and had a lovely time helping Cllr Rooker raise funds for his chosen charities.

Sunday 14th April Ian and I met up with the Fenland Sappers. They were off to Normandy to paint a bridge for the week on behalf of the Royal Engineers Association. I donated £500 to them from my Mayor's Charity Funds as a thank you for all of their support within the community and supporting me and Ian throughout our Mayoral years. I understand from the report, news and social media that everything went to plan and they all had an enjoyable time.

Saturday 20th April we attended, along with other Mayors and Chairs, the Huntingdon's branch of the St George's Association. It was a lovely evening and we were lucky enough to have our evening meal in the beautiful surroundings of Huntingdon Town Hall. A slightly wonky room, but lovely nonetheless!

Sunday just passed we attended the St George's Festival organised by the March Events committee. I had the honour of opening the event and announcing the winners of the Writing Competition headed by Cllr Hannah Orbell. From my Mayoral funds I donated a sum of money to purchase the winners some gifts. I hope, with the items they received, it'll inspire the children to continue writing. Thank you to Hannah for organising this.

There are a few more weeks to go until my Mayoral term ends, and I have planned to attend a few more events, including visiting St Ives and Huntingdon.

Throughout the nine months of fund-raising, Ian and I have raised £3,150 to distribute to our chosen charities. As you can see from the schedule, they mostly consist of youth groups and local organisations.

Thank you to all those who helped with fund raising, organising and supporting Ian and I in this nine month term.