

## **Message from Watton Town Mayor:**

"Sadly, we had to cancel the big celebrations we had planned for The 75th Anniversary of VE Day so some different plans were put together. Celebrations did however take place in people's front gardens, with cream teas, lots of bunting and flags. It was lovely to see all the colourful posters in the windows, Union flags, rainbows and sunflowers amongst others, who knew Watton had so many talented artists?!

Although social distancing was observed, it didn't detract from having fun. To be fair though, it did get quite noisy in some places, as people had to shout across their gardens to hold a conversation with the neighbours. I feel very proud of the children, some of whom don't really understand why they can't go out with their friends, but they just got on with it, calling over the fence to be heard. It all added to the fun.

Community spirit has definitely come to the fore here, our volunteers have been amazing, not only with shopping and collecting prescriptions for vulnerable folk, who are unable to go out, but also being that friendly face at a time when some could otherwise go for long periods without seeing anyone. I have spoken to most of the volunteers, they're a really friendly helpful group, some even asked if there was anything else they could do. Amazing people!

I'm pleased to say that our Market has done a fantastic job under difficult circumstances, ensuring social distancing, whilst providing a much needed service to our residents. It's been very busy, but the Market Traders always manage to stay cheerful. With the shops that are open, including butchers, bakers, chemists, amongst others, this allows people to get all their shopping within a reasonably small local area.

There are quite a few Societies and Groups in and around Watton, including the Wayland Chamber of Commerce (Wayland Directory being delivered as I write), the Watton Neighbourhood Plan Group and the Twinning Association, to name but a few, who are still working away, making plans for when things get back to whatever normal will be at that time. Obviously, any meetings have to be held remotely, whether this be email, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Zoom or whatever, but they are there, doing everything they can to plan for better times ahead. I know this, as I am the Council representative for quite a few and as such, am kept 'in the loop'. I won't name them all, for fear of missing someone out!

This brings me to Watton Town Council. We are communicating through email daily, with weekly 'catch-up' Zoom meetings and phone calls where necessary. It was proposed and voted that I will remain as Chairman and Mayor, until the first meeting in May 2021. All Councillors will also retain their existing positions, i.e. Chair of HR, Finance, Neighbourhood Plan etc., until May 2021. All decisions made are recorded and will be ratified at the first Full Council Meeting that we are able to hold, when current rules allow.

Once again, I give credit to our Clerk and all the staff, without whom we could not function to any degree. They keep us all up to date with which shops and businesses are open and what they can provide during the lockdown. Staff are also coordinating

the volunteers, ensuring that all those who need help, are getting it. They are working remotely, but still taking phone calls and emails, making sure that we are aware of things we need to know, including any new regulations and directives, either from Central Government, County, District and Norfolk ALC.

Although there are a lot of businesses that have helped out in various ways, too many to mention, but I will make one exception. The Italian Job in Watton High Street. They have cheered so many people up, delivering over 150 free pizzas to the staff at seven Care homes in the local area, Boots the Chemist, Total Health, Wayland Prison, The Ambulance Service and last, but not least, Fleur the Postlady. I'm reliably informed that Dave Scragg, one of our marvellous First Responders, also helped out with logistics and delivery. Well done and thank you to Hal and Fiona from The Italian Job, an absolute credit to Watton.

That's all I have to report for now. I really hope that by the time you read this, things have improved and that we are back to a new kind of normal. Keep safe.

Pat Warwick, Chairman and Mayor