

Mayor's Report - September 2026 :-

With two months to report on since the last Full Council, this is going to be a little longer than usual - it's been a busier time than I'd anticipated, but an enjoyable and useful time, as well. Indeed, the day after the last Full Council saw Richard and I attending the Royal Welsh Show, on a perfect day for it. The reception at the Powys building there was a little underwhelming - I think I wasn't the only one there who'd imagined there might be some kind of talk or presentation, but there wasn't. However, some useful conversations were had, both at the Tour de France table outside (yes, there was one, and no, we didn't learn all that much there!) and at the reception itself.

After a short holiday, and back in the real world, I've been meeting with David Griffiths to prepare for the Business Seminar planned for the Royal Oak on 29th September, next Tuesday, liaising with James Thompson and Martin Jacques from PCC on a number of things to do with litter and tidiness, and seeing whether we as the Town Council could do anything to assist following the closure of the Food Bank. We were able to provide practical assistance to one man who approached us seeking help, but it looks as though the service to needy people and families is being maintained by the Salvation Army in Newtown, and we discovered that the supplies that Rob and Denise had indicated might come to us are in fact legally the property of the Trussell Trust. I'm hopeful that the Food Bank will reopen before too long in new premises.

My investigations did mean I met with Andrea Roberts, the Food Champion at Tesco, which was a useful encounter. Last week I took part in a litter pick centred on Tesco, which she and the store manager attended, and a further one has been arranged (by James Thompson) for 19th October. It's just an hour, from 12.30 to 1.30, and it would be good to see a few more there. I've been doing my regular round too, and a few extra bits from time to time, and in the process meeting with quite a few local people who do their bit to keep our town tidy, many of whom didn't know they could obtain bags etc from the library or from our own Information Office.

I've also been liaising with Titch Turner concerning his wish to establish a Men's Shed in Welshpool, something that ties in with my mayoral theme which is to do with mental health. I was then contacted by Jain Downing at the Integrated Family Centre, as there had been plans to establish one there. Titch and I are due to meet her there on Monday 21st, which is before our meeting but after I prepared this report, so I may have some additional comments to make. I think this would be a very important addition to the town's range of facilities.

The various social events attended as mayor have included a Parkinson's coffee morning, a Welsh afternoon tea at Church House, the sports day organised by the Feathers, sadly on the wettest day of the year in Welshpool (the deputy mayor was there throughout, getting very wet, while I just looked in between Sunday services), the opening of the "Longest Yarn" exhibition (Alan Crowe deserves praise for his hard work and persistence in getting this remarkable exhibition for our town), the centenary celebrations at the Bowls Club, and the opening day of the Steam and Diesel Festival on the Welshpool & Llanfair Railway. All these were very enjoyable in themselves, but each one also provided opportunity for productive conversations. It's good to talk about our plans for the town, and also to learn a little about how others see us.

As mayor I've also over this time attended two meetings of the T.J. Evans Trust, the majority of council committees and working groups - and spent half a day behind the desk in the Information Centre. I've tried to continue keeping my eye on how our existing flower beds and containers look, and I'm quite pleased with how they made it through the summer. I've been happy also to give a little time to the annual Book Sale at the Bank Holiday weekend. I am now in the process of writing to local businesses to introduce myself and talk about my hope to raise funds to help local organisations working in the area of mental health, as my charity for the year, and I hope to visit as widely as I can - I'm happy to respond to all invitations, as time allows.