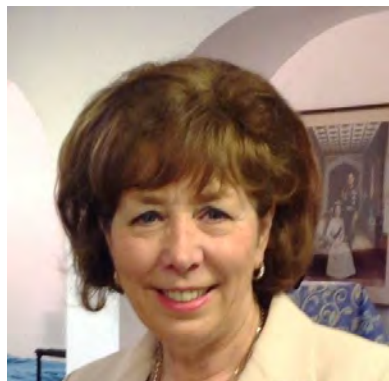


Councillor Marian Hannaford-Dobson 2014-2015

Message from your Mayor - June 2014

With the planning and the pomp of Mayor Making over, it's now time to get down to the job of being the Mayor of Marlborough.

In my first two weeks of office, I have chaired a Full Town Council meeting and attended several



other committees and working parties. I also chaired a Common Users Group meeting held at the Golf Club. This is a group of people who use The Common for a variety of reasons - football, rugby, golf, flying model planes, walking the dog and those who just enjoy the Common and take a real interest in its future. In turn, the thoughts of the group are passed on to the Town Council helping to influence decision-making. Anyone interested is welcome to come along and to put ideas forward, simply contact the Council office for details.

This year Marlborough has entered the Small Town category of the RHS regional South West in Bloom competition. A small committee of determined people is planning and plotting to put Marlborough on the map. Doing well in this competition is bound to have a knock-on effect on the local economy and tourism. We are appealing to any interested person who can help in any way to join us.

So, this week you will have seen me, pile of letters in hand visiting every single retailer in the High Street and talking to each owner or manager of these premises to prevail on them to put a hanging basket or trough of flowers outside their premises. I am pleased to report a huge amount of good will and many promises to provide some sort of floral display for judging day on 8th July.

On Friday, I laid a wreath at our War Memorial to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the D-Day landings. We were hugely privileged to have three local D-Day veterans with us. We owe so much to these brave, gallant yet modest men who only tell us that they were just doing their duty. Without their service to our country, our lives today would be so different. Thank you to them all.

What will the next two weeks hold...

The life of the Mayor is never dull - July 2014

Well, the life of the Mayor is never dull! Since my last blog, I have attended the blessing of two Mayors, one in Malmsbury and the other in Devizes. These church services are traditionally to wish the new Mayors of these two towns a happy and productive year.

I was invited by *Help for Heroes* to visit Tedworth House in Tidworth to view facilities for wounded and disabled servicemen and women. It is simply amazing to see what these young people with injuries and disabilities have achieved and all living full and productive lives. It was a very humbling experience and I can only commend to you the wonderful work undertaken by this charity.

I attended the North East Scouts AGM. The evening began with an outdoor service to commemorate those Scouts who had joined up in the First World War and fallen in battle. It was

shocking to realise how many Scouts and their leaders from this town and surrounding villages gave their lives in WW1 and sad to hear just how young they were. Their names and ranks were read out from the Roll of Honour and then the Last Post was played, it was very touching.

The 2nd of July saw me at Marlborough College for the Wiltshire School Games Sports Day to present some of the medals. Over a thousand children competed in every conceivable sport you could imagine. They did not all expect to win but, what I heard time and time again was that they were trying to achieve their "PB." This, I was told, referred to their own 'personal best.' What a wonderful concept for young people to strive for.

On the 6th July I joined the Mencap Summer Party and as soon as I arrived I was told I was in the Patrick team and I spent a happy hour playing rounders before eating a delicious afternoon tea. My poor legs were bit stiff the next day but, it was worth it.

On Monday, 7th July, Councillors and members of the public assembled for a "Community Clean Up". This was in readiness for the South West in Bloom judge's visit to the town. We dead-headed roses and dug the flower beds in Priory Gardens, picked up litter and weeds from the High Street, washed road signs and telephone boxes. Hard work but, very enjoyable. Afterwards we had a good natter over a cup of tea and went home well pleased with ourselves. My grateful thanks go out to this fantastic team. We will not know the outcome of our entry into South West in Bloom until September but, the judges did seem pleased.



On Thursday, 17th July, I presented certificates to pupils at St Peter's school for their entries into the Poppy Painting competition run alongside Marlborough in Bloom. I will also be visiting Preshute and St Mary's schools to award their certificates. I was delighted that all three of our infant, junior and primary schools took part in the competition. The paintings were charming and it was a difficult task to select the winning entries.

On Friday, 18th July I attended the opening of the Jazz Festival and a reception for Wiltshire Life. As I said at the beginning of this blog, a Mayor's life is not dull, never boring and certainly very enjoyable.

Just a quick reminder about the Civil War Re-enactment on the Common on the 26th and 27th July. It promises to be an exciting weekend. The battle commences each day at 3pm where 17th century soldiers with muskets, horses and cannons will fight it out. There will also be a Living History exhibition in the Priory Gardens where you will see 17th century life as it was when Marlborough

was overrun by the Royalists in 1642. Both events are provided free for the whole family. Just a word of caution, the battle will have muskets and cannons firing and will be very noisy so warn small children and perhaps leave your dog at home.

A very busy Town Council - August 2014

In my last blog I reminded you that a Living History exhibition in the Priory Gardens and the Civil War re-enactment on the Common was to take place. I hope that you were able to go along and see these two very interesting and exciting events. I think that those of you who did attend the re-



enactment will agree that action was the name of the day. Approximately four hundred members of the English Civil War Society dressed as 17th Century soldiers took part, some on horseback, others with long pikes and the rest with muskets. The noise of the cannonade coupled with the firing of the muskets and the thunder of the horses hooves created a living history lesson that delighted both adults and children alike. Over the weekend an exhibition was set up in the Priory Gardens showing visitors an authentic view of day-to-day life in a 17th century village which included practical demonstrations of the period from many different trades and craftsmen. A totally fascinating experience for visitors both young and old.

Reading my own blog, it occurred to me that the reader might think that the life of the Council is all about its public civic face and wonder when the work of the Council is done. I can assure you that the Town Council is kept very busy. It has five committees which each meet on a six week cycle. Each Councillor may sit two committees in addition to the Planning Committee and will perhaps sit on working parties and outside committees affiliated to the Council, it is the job of the Mayor to chair the Full Council and sign off the work the Council has done in the previous six weeks. The 28th July saw us with a Full Town Council meeting followed by an Amenities and Open Spaces Committee. This resulted in the first meeting starting at 7 o'clock and the second not finishing until almost ten o'clock.

The Mayors Cricket match took place on the 30th July. The Mayor's team usually comprises of members of the staff or any unsuspecting neighbour or members of the Mayors family who have their arms pulled up their backs to play, and the local Cricket Club who field as many of their players that are able to make it for a mid-week and early evening match.

It was on a very hot evening this year with the Mayor's team winning the toss to bat first. It was a very closely fought match with the result in doubt right up to the end but, the Mayor's team just prevailed and won by a narrow margin. Our grateful thanks go to the Cricket Club for a delicious cricket tea and a very enjoyable evening.

On the 4th August the Town Council joined with the 4 Military Intelligence Battalion, several local scout and cadet groups and veterans from WW2 to lay wreaths at the War Memorial to

commemorate a hundred years since Britain joined World War One. A very sobering time when one can only contemplate the sacrifice made by so many and the futility of war.

The following week I attended the opening of the Wiltshire Artists Exhibition, always a delight to see so many talented people in our county. I also attended the Mencap skittles match at the Football Club and presented the prizes to this happy band of people.

August is traditionally a quiet month for a Mayor with the following four months being the busiest time of the year for the Council. While writing this blog, meetings have already been arranged for the Mop Fairs, Christmas Lights Switch-on and Carol services and numerous other things that happen over that period.

Should any of you as members of the public wish to attend either a committee meeting or indeed a Full Town Council Meeting, we would be delighted to see you. The time and the dates of these meetings are posted on our website, on our notice boards and are displayed in the library or alternately phone the Town Council office on [01672 512487](tel:01672512487) and our staff will give you all the information you require.

Mayor's September blog



The Council continues its round of meetings throughout the whole year with Councillors and staff trying to fit their holidays in around meetings that often require whole council participation. As an example, we have recently had yet another pre-planning consultation meeting about the Crown Estate land in Salisbury Road which proposes the building of over two hundred new homes. Meetings like these

involve negotiations between Town Councillors, Wiltshire Councils Planners and the Developers and will often result in different opinions being expressed. In contrast, there will be similar meetings where all parties are mainly in agreement. The proposed new Tennis Club on the same site as the Golf Club comes to mind. This club has been looking for a permanent home for many years. It has a full complement of children eager to participate in the sport and has many adult participants who teach the children while enjoying the sport themselves. We have great hopes that their ambitions are finally going to be achieved. The club will certainly be a welcome addition to the many other sporting facilities in the town.

On the 29th August it was a great pleasure to be invited to County Hall as Marlborough's Mayor to support three of our residents who were presented with the Russian Ushakov Medal. Russia awarded these medals to servicemen who took part in the Arctic Convoys over seventy years ago during the Second World War.

On the 30th August I presented cups at the Marlborough Gardening Association's Annual Show. The produce there had to be seen to be believed with onions as large as melons, carrots as long as your

arms and a marrow that was so heavy and large that I failed to lift it. All sorts of crafts from sewing, painting and cake making were also on show and I was just amazed at the talent present in our small town.

On the 9th September I attended a joint ecumenical civic service to commemorate the start of the First World War. The names of the fallen from Marlborough were read out and a candle lit for each one. It was a very touching and fitting memorial.

On the 16th of September I was privileged to be asked to present medals in the Town Hall to nine servicemen and women from 4 Military Intelligence Battalion while their families and loved ones looked on. Most medals were awarded for tours in Afghanistan and long service. There were not many dry eyes when these gallant young men and women's commendations were read out and their medals presented.

The 18th September saw the committee of the Marlborough in Bloom and a contingent of Councillors and Council staff attending the awards for Southwest in Bloom. This was a daylong event held in Trowbridge and as this was the first time that Marlborough had entered this competition, we did not have great expectations. But wonder upon wonder we won no less than three cups and five certificates, a wonderful day and one I will remember with affection for a long time to come.



The next day I welcomed Jeff and Sandra Sewell from our sister council in Marlborough New Zealand into the Council Chamber where the Council had a meaningful discussion on strengthening links between our two communities.

On Saturday 27th September I attended with the MP, Claire Perry a presentation of a certificate for Marlborough Independent Trader of the year which was awarded to The Cats Whiskers shop in Kingsbury Street. Later in the day I joined the opening of the new shop Sea Salt in the High Street and joined the sea shanty singers out on the pavement, all very lively and jolly. On Sunday, I opened the Charity Fun Day held on behalf of British Heart Foundation in the Recreation ground. This had been put on by a young man called Tom Pound who has also climbed Mount Kilimanjaro for this charity and I believe Tom deserves our heartiest congratulations for all his efforts. My husband Stewart and I then dashed away to London to welcome our new granddaughter Theadora born the day before on Saturday to number two son Nicholas and his wife Arabella.

Monday the 29th September saw Stewart and I at the launch of the new mobile chemotherapy unit in the Great Western Hospital. This amazing new unit will visit Marlborough once a week to administer treatment to cancer sufferers and eliminate the long and often uncomfortable journeys these patients have had to endure in the past. The new unit can treat up to four patients every two hours on a two patients to one staff ratio which I am sure will add to the confidence and the comfort for patients when many are feeling very low.

A quick reminder that the Duke of Kent will be in Marlborough on the 27th October at 11.30pm to unveil a plaque to the fallen of World War One. Do please pop down to greet him, apparently, he likes to mix with and talk to the people of the towns he visits.

Mayor's October blog

My apologies, my blog is dreadfully late this month. Mostly because it has been the busiest month of my Mayoral year so far. However, it has also been the most exciting and enjoyable.

The major event in October of course was the visit to the town of His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent. The Town Council and 4 Military Intelligence Battalion had many meetings to plan the day down to the last detail. We agonised over the design of the plaque on the War Memorial, road closures, who would be presented to the Duke and even what we would have for lunch. I think that you can imagine those meetings. We really should not have worried, the



Duke was a charming and gracious guest who immediately put everyone at ease and as a result we all had an enjoyable and memorable day.

Since writing my last blog I have attended five council meetings, seven subcommittee meetings, eight civic occasions, opened the Mop Fair and attended three training workshops for Finance Audit, Planning and Bench Marking. So, if you would like to benchmark and audit a planning meeting, I am the person for the job.

On the 10th October I was fortunate to be invited to celebrate twenty-five years of the Splash organisation in the town hall. Splash has been running a programme of positive activities for the most vulnerable young people in Wiltshire during school holidays. Their aim is to divert young people from negative behaviour and to raise their self-esteem and confidence. Paul Martin from Televisions "Flog It" was there and conducted a very successful auction. Also attending this celebration was Bear Grylls and I can confirm to his many admirers he is as charming in the flesh as he appears on television.

The 15th October saw me in Salisbury as the guest of the City Mayor Councillor Jo Broom. Along with other Mayors of Wiltshire we visited the very progressive special needs school Exeter House. The building was ultra-modern and the methods used to try to get these young people to their full potential were awe inspiring. The overall impression and memory I am left with from this groundbreaking school is of happy smiling faces. We were then privileged to have a tour of Salisbury's beautiful City Hall and after lunch visited their world-famous cathedral.

Later on in the month I attended the official unveiling of the new Air Ambulance for Wiltshire, a Bell 429 helicopter. I was given much very technical information about its capabilities but suffice to say

that the bit I was most impressed with was that the air ambulance can reach anywhere in Wiltshire within eleven minutes from being called, very comforting for us all.

Preparations continue for the Christmas Light Switch on Evening which is on Friday 21st November. From three o'clock onwards Santa will be in his grotto in the Town Hall meeting the children of the town. It may be wise to book as he gets very busy. A market with many interesting stalls will be in the High Street and also some children's rides and candy floss stalls. The school carol choir event will be held in St Mary's Church from 5.30pm. Santa's sleigh will drive through the town at approximately 6.30pm with a lantern parade of children following and singing carols. I will be on board the sleigh accompanying Santa to a stage in front of the Castle and Ball where the citizen of the year will be announced followed by the countdown to the light switch on at 7p.m.

I do hope that you can join us on the 21st November it is promising to be a very enjoyable night.

Mayor's November blog

It really does not surprise me that the people of Marlborough were noted in a national newspaper last year as being among the most generous in the United Kingdom. I am constantly reminded of it whenever the Town Council or various charitable organisations that I belong to appeal for help, be it monetary or volunteers to help with a project.

This was the case for the Christmas Light Switch on Event staged on the 21st November. This event was co-ordinated for the first time by the Council, mostly because of safety issues in 2013. The Council asked for volunteers to come forward to help with this event and we were not disappointed. The Rotary Club volunteered for and ran Santa's grotto in the Town Hall, the Lions supplied Santa's sleigh and both organisation supplied stewards for the High Street and the barriers on the entrance roads into town to enforce the road closure.

Santa arrived by sleigh accompanied by myself and Ella Steele the St Peters pupil chosen to turn on the lights. They were followed by two hundred primary school children along the High Street all carrying little lanterns and singing carols. There was also a Christmas market and rides and swings for the children. The people of Marlborough did not let us



down and turned out in force. It has been estimated that between four and five thousand people attended the evening and the feedback directed to the council and to myself has been very complimentary. With that in mind and a big smile on our faces we are planning an even bigger event next year, so watch this space.

On the Friday and Saturday preceding Armistice Day I was part of a team selling poppies and collecting on behalf of the Royal British Legion. Both collectors and the public gave freely. Marlborough as a Town with only eight thousand residents collected over ten thousand pounds, and I am told that not all the money is in yet so it might even be a higher figure. It really is amazing how generous the people of Marlborough are. Then once again on Remembrance Sunday

the town's residents turned out in their hundreds to show their respect for the fallen of two world wars at the war memorial.

The Councillors have started the process of putting together the budget for next year. The budget setting process is a long and often difficult process but is essential if the Council are to maintain the services that they provide for the town. The Council's outside staff are responsible for the Priory Gardens, the Cemetery, Wye Gardens, Coopers Meadow, the Common, the Recreation Ground and the War memorial, and a fifty one percent ownership of Stonebridge Meadow. They also maintain the Play Areas, and plant and maintain the many flower baskets and troughs around the town. Additionally the Town Council own and administer two commercial premises, two houses, four flats, the Town Hall and offices all of which have to be maintained and must be accounted for in the budget setting process.

The Council have recently been consulted on a planning application from National Grid Property Holdings who have applied to remove two metres of contaminated soil in the western section of the former Gas works adjacent to Kelham Gardens. This proposed work is perhaps long overdue as this land has stood derelict for almost twenty years and hopefully when these works have been completed it can be sensibly used for the benefit of the town.

The council held a public meeting on the 10th November to seek the views of the residents of the town for future parking requirements. Although widely advertised very few members of the public were willing to come out on a cold Monday evening. There was however a high turn out of Marlborough Councillors who joined with members of the public and got down to make some very sensible and productive suggestions. These suggestions were then taken forward to the Wiltshire Parking Review Board held in Devizes on the 19th November by a team of five of us from Marlborough Town Council and one Unitary Councillor who represents the East Ward. One can only hope that the voices from the Marlborough team are noted and our suggestions and comments taken forward.

Another project the Council has been working on is a scheme called "The Coach Friendly Initiative". When I first moved to Marlborough over thirty years ago Marlborough's High Street was a regular stopping off point for most of the national and regional coach companies. They brought business to the town and kept the High Street vibrant and busy.

Their valued custom ensured that the High Street survived the many vagaries and ups and downs of the economical position experienced nationally. It cannot have escaped your notice that very few coaches now visit Marlborough High Street and Marlborough Town Council along with other retail representatives of the Town are in talks to try to reverse the trend and bring back the coaches to our High Street. It is early days but I have high hopes for this initiative.

Those of you that attended the Lights Switch on Evening will have seen Alfie Johnson being named as the Citizen of the Year. Alfie has been the Town Crier for over twenty one years and has been associated with almost every one of the local organisations in the town, there are far too many to mention them all. He is loved and admired by all and I can't think of a more deserving candidate for



this honour. Well done Alfie.

This will probably be the last blog I shall do before Christmas so I would like to wish you and your families a Happy Peaceful Christmas and a Healthy and Prosperous New Year.

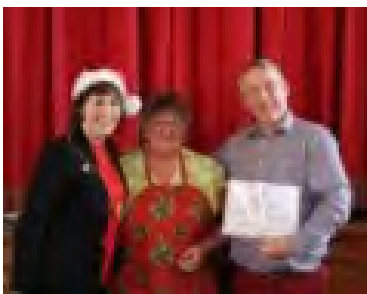
God Bless

Marian Hannaford-Dobson

Mayor's December Blog

It seems very strange to think that only a few days after Christmas Day all the hustle and bustle and extra work that Christmas entails quickly fades into the background and normal life resumes. We all, of course, over cater for the holiday and will have eaten far too much. Many of us have also had the pleasure of our families around us and have been able to catch up on family news, feeling free just to sit and enjoy each other's company.

Stewart's and my family comprises of seven children, three son-in-laws, two daughters-in-law, one partner and seven very beautiful grandchildren. All came to see us at Christmas and my youngest



daughter also brought along a very good friend who had sadly lost his mother. There were babies rolling around the floor, five year old twins trying out their new roller skates on the patio, our eldest granddaughter, who is eight, wanting Nana to teach her to knit while her six-year-old cousin was dressed up as a Ninja Fighter! Does it sound like bedlam? Well, perhaps, but such happy bedlam and so different to the many people who spend Christmas entirely alone.

I was privileged to attend the Christmas Lunch held in the Town Hall arranged each year by Nigel and Joy Kerton and their band of volunteers. I spoke to every guest present and all had varying reasons for attending. One lady's family had emigrated to New Zealand and although they would have loved her to join them for Christmas, she felt that the journey would be too much for her to manage. Another chap, who was in a wheelchair, told me that he and his wife managed daily but, it was so good to see his wife give up her caring duties for one day and be waited on herself. As I say, many reasons for attending but the overriding one was a need for good company and to celebrate Christmas Day among friends.

The Town Council will now get back to its normal duties and we are already planning the flower beds and open spaces within the town ready for spring. One or two of our playgrounds need updating and this has been budgeted for. Cooper's Meadow in the centre of town is leased from Wiltshire Council on a 99-year lease. The Town Council at its 15th December Full Council meeting took the decision to ask for a Community Asset Transfer of this land. We have high hopes that this transfer request, if agreed by



Wiltshire Council, will pass the ownership of the meadow to Marlborough Town Council by spring this year. This will, of course, increase the land owned and administered by the Town Council and will leave us free to open it up for more community use. So, if you have any ideas of what you would like to see at Cooper's Meadow, we will certainly be pleased to hear from you. Please send us an e-mail or give us a ring, details are on our home page.



This is the year that CCTV will come to town; planning consent has been applied for, positions for the cameras agreed and now just the final push to get it up and running. This is something close to my heart. Having campaigned for CCTV in the town centre for over ten years, I am so pleased it will be achieved in my Mayoral Year.

The Old Victorian Cemetery is long overdue for some TLC and the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Margaret Rose, has declared that this is to be her project this year and is launching a "Friends of the Victorian Cemetery Group." If you have an interest in joining this group just leave your name with our office staff and we will get in touch with you about meetings and our next Community Clear-up Day. The Old Cemetery's history is really interesting and it's fascinating to discover the dates and related families from the last century and so rewarding to help preserve it for future generations.

After our success last year, Marlborough will again be entering 'Southwest in Bloom' and we would love anyone with an interest in gardening or any aspect of making the town beautiful with flowering baskets, tubs, etc. to come and join us.

Mayor's January Blog

January for the Town Council is a time for planning the new year. The outside staff are cutting back shrubs and overhanging trees as well as catching up on some TLC on the town's benches, fences and litter bins. The Estates Manager has already ordered the bedding plants for our gardens, hanging baskets and tubs for spring planting. Apparently, we are going to have "hot" colours this year interspersed with some cool cream and whites, I really can't wait to see them.

The planning committee has already been busy this year considering lots of applications for new signage for some businesses, extensions for existing homes and applications for new builds. Amended draft proposals were debated by the committee concerning the land adjacent to Rabley Wood View. Sangsters in partnership with Wilts Council want to build houses on the recreation ground that serves Rogers Meadow, the Thorns as well as Rabley Wood View. As you can imagine the residents of these three estates are not very happy about it and have protested loudly. The planning committee felt that the new draft proposals did not meet local demand which is for low cost smaller homes and also that traffic difficulties in the area had not been addressed by the new proposals.

The planning committee is still awaiting an update and final plans from the Crown Estates on the proposal to build 220 houses on the Salisbury Road site. On a happy note the Tennis Club has finally received planning consent for their new tennis courts. These courts will be situated adjacent to the Swindon Road on the northeast side of the common within the Golf Club's perimeter; the club does

amazing work with the youngsters in the town and will be a very welcome addition to the town's sporting facilities.

It is not widely known but Marlborough Town Council own a meadow situated at the end of Tin Pit and behind Rabley Wood View. The riverbank in the meadow has now been opened up for the public to enjoy walking by. New fences are in place marking a walkway down to and along the riverbank. The entrance to the meadow is through a gate at the end of Tin Pit. I do hope that residents will use and enjoy this public amenity.

Mayor's February Blog

I have recently attended meetings in Devizes on forward planning for our town. The government has decreed that Wiltshire as a county has to build 42,000 houses before 2026 and Marlborough's share of that number is approximately three hundred new homes.



Baden Powell Challenge L-R: Gemma Howard, Rachel McGovern, The Mayor, Megan Goddard, Alice Rysiecki

I know this sounds a lot for a small market town like Marlborough to absorb but, two hundred and twenty new homes are designated for the Salisbury Road site opposite Tesco which leaves us roughly eighty more homes to reach government targets. There are several small planning applications in the pipeline at present which will account for a number of our quota. As the rest do not have to be completed until 2026, one hopes that small infill slots over the next ten years can

accommodate most of this number. We are very lucky that the town is not one of the three Principal Settlements in Wiltshire which will take the lion's share of Wiltshire's quota and that we also sit within an AONB (Area of Natural Beauty), so we are afforded some protection from massive development.

The Town Council has already objected to the proliferation of luxury retirement homes being built in our town and we continue to state clearly that this type of development makes our community top heavy. We continue to press for affordable starter homes which we all know are in short supply.

I spent a very pleasant evening at North Wiltshire Girl Guiding Awards in the Legends Lounge of Swindon Town Football Club. Eight girls from the Marlborough area did very well indeed with four of them being awarded the Baden Powell Award and a further four awarded the Chief Guides Challenge in the presence of the Lord Lieutenant and the High Sheriff of Wiltshire. There were at least two hundred girls representing packs from north Wiltshire, and it was delightful and very interesting to hear the challenges that these girls take on and about their many overseas trips.



The Chief Guides Challenge L-R: Jess Elliman, L.W. Saliman, The Mayor, Bethany James, Lauren Goddard

I did mention in my December blog that the Town Council has applied for a Community Asset Transfer for Coopers Meadow - an asset which is currently owned by Wiltshire Council and now being transferred to Marlborough Town Council. I also asked that if anyone had any ideas to enhance the meadow to let me know. So far, suggestions include enlarging the play area, adding seats and tables for picnics and something recreational such as a trim trail for older children.

All good ideas and I think if these are combined with the lovely river walk (which really looks at its best in the spring and summer thanks to ARK (Action for the River Kennet)) plus a visit to see the lambs then it would all add up to make a pleasant afternoon out at little or no cost for Marlborough families. Anyway, please keep the suggestions coming in. Nothing is set in stone yet and we really do appreciate your suggestions.

Mayor's March Blog

March has just flown by in a whirl of activities with most of the Town Council committees gearing up for the year ahead and it's a time for bringing to fruition all the plans made over the winter months. One of these which is very dear to my heart is CCTV and it will be up and running in the latter weeks of April (look out for the press release). It has been a long time coming to our town but



well worth the wait as I am totally convinced that it will act as a deterrent to many visiting would-be criminals.

Early in March I entertained a contingent of French students who were on an exchange visit to Marlborough College. I showed them the Town Hall, the Mayoral robes and chain but, like most young people, they were most interested in the cells below the Court Room and the Victorian stocks displayed there which given half a chance they would have locked each other up in!

On the 9th of March Marlborough, in common with most cities and towns in England and throughout the Commonwealth, raised a flag on the Town Hall to commemorate Commonwealth Day 2015. I read a message from Her Majesty the Queen and there was a further message from the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth. Days like this serve to remind us of our long traditions, of loyalty and the ties we enjoy with Commonwealth countries.

Full Council on the 9th March dealt with many issues facing the town including some legal ones concerning the Mop Fairs and Jazz Festival, a strategy for the town's three water meadows and a report on a meeting between the signatories of the Community Covenant and 4MI Battalion. Council also discussed the Annual Parish meeting which is on 27th April 7.00 pm (hope you will come along), policies for our small grants scheme and for charging for use of the town's outside

The Commonwealth flag flies above the Town Hall



spaces such as The Common, The Priory and Wye House Gardens.

The High Sheriff of Wiltshire is appointed by the Queen to uphold and support the Crown, the Judiciary, Law Enforcement, all of the emergency services as well as local authorities. Once a year, the High Sheriff holds a service in Salisbury Cathedral known as 'Rule of Law' to celebrate these many organisations which are all asked to form a parade in the Cathedral. He was kind enough to invite me to take part in this. I was



duly lined up to process with all the other Mayors of Wiltshire, of which there are many, all dressed in our traditional red gowns complete with our insignia. The procession also included representatives of all the other authorities and concluded with the Judges, all suitable robed and bewigged (very impressive). It was a splendid day and I am so pleased to have taken part in it, although it was a little awesome to be in such august company. It was a spectacle I shall remember for a long time.

At the Planning meeting on the 23rd March, the Crown Estate's agents gave a presentation to the Council outlining the 220 houses and a hotel that they hope to build on the Salisbury Road just opposite Tesco. They outlined the route through the new estate and the fact that the houses would all be built on the lower slopes of the hill to safeguard the view from the higher spots in the town. At the same meeting Marlborough College announced plans to build a much needed replacement for Preshute primary school on land they own to the north of Barton Park and College Fields. These plans would also include the building of possibly one hundred new homes. The Town Council now awaits full planning applications for both of these developments.

On a lighter note, I am staging a choir concert in the Town Hall on 1st May 2015 at 7.30 pm. Choirs, including our own local Community Choir, will take part in what I'm sure will be a very enjoyable evening. Choir tickets will be available in the White Horse Book Shop and the Town Council Office. It's all in aid of my charities Macmillan Nursing and Leukaemia Research. Do come along - it promises to be a very good evening.

Mayor's April Blog

April has been particularly busy with a lot of loose ends to tie up before the new Mayor takes up her post. The Council met to discuss a strategic strategy for the coming year. There are so many projects in the pipeline that, like any business, the Council has to prioritise them and provide a reasonable timeline in which each project should be completed. This proved to be a very rewarding exercise with broad agreement from all Councillors and staff alike.

The town's Planning Committee continues to have long agendas. The projects that have caused most concern this year have been the Crown Estate's Outline Planning Application for the Salisbury Road development of two hundred and twenty houses plus a hotel, the proposed development of thirty-six houses on the play area of Rabley Wood View and a possible development application to build a new school and up to a hundred houses on the land north of Barton Park. I must stress that these first two applications are yet to be determined by Wiltshire Council and in the case of land to the north of Barton Park, the land in question is still to be considered as to whether it is even suitable for development.

The Asset Transfer of Cooper's Meadow from Wiltshire Council to the town is well under way. The Town Council will be considering some of the very good ideas that have put been forward to improve this important community asset to make the meadow a welcoming destination for all the town's residents.

The Annual Parish Meeting was held on the 27th April, sadly only thirty-eight people attended. This is a meeting for the people of the parish to come forward and put their views on the Council's work over the last year. Only four people asked questions, two gentlemen asked about parking and yellow lines, while two ladies seemed to be questioning the advisability of spending money on childrens' play areas. Luckily all questions could be answered satisfactorily, the yellow lines in question are to be implemented as soon as possible and the money for the play area and trim trail comes in the form of what is known as Section 106 funding. This is money contributed by developers for the good of the town once their developments are occupied. The proviso on this funding was that it must be spent on recreational facilities for young people.



I have visited the Bodleian Library in Oxford to inspect the Vicar's Library housed there. The Vicar's Library is a collection of 237 books bequeathed to the town by Rev William White in 1678 for the use by the Vicar of St Marys and under the trusteeship of the Mayor and Corporation of Marlborough. There are some extremely rare volumes housed there, all contained in individual moisture proof boxes and kept in a temperature controlled room. Marlborough Town

Council gave the collection to the Bodleian Library Oxford on permanent loan in 1985. Each Mayor as trustee of the collection is free to visit and inspect these lovely old books. I found it well worth the effort and really enjoyed the day.

My civic duties this month included a visit to Yeovil Town Council where I enjoyed a tour of the town and the military establishments connected with it. On 24th April, I attended the Annual Dinner at the Headquarters Intelligence Corps in Chicksands, Bedfordshire and a reception on the 30th April at County Hall Trowbridge hosted by the Chairman of Wiltshire Council. I have also visited all the public houses in the town with the Mace Bearers and the Town Crier whose duty it is to taste each publican's ale to see if it is of good quality. This is a very old tradition going back to the days when the Borough Council granted the Inn Keepers a licence to serve ale.



Twenty-four years ago, the Town Council bought the Merchant's House in the High Street (it used to be W H Smiths) and handed it over to trustees headed up by Sir John Sykes to restore the house and to establish a museum for the town. On the 14th May, the Town Council attended the Merchant's House to formally receive the rent. The Trustees of the Merchant's House will pay to me as the Mayor a bag of pepper corns as the rent due for the coming year. It is all very colourful and very nice to think that our small town has created a new tradition which, one hopes, will be enjoyed for many years to come.

This will be my last blog as Mayor and I would like to thank all of you who have taken the time to read my monthly accounts of a Mayor's life. I leave you in the capable hands of my friend and colleague Councillor Margaret Rose.

It has been a real pleasure and privilege to be the Mayor of Marlborough.