

Mayor's Communication – Council Monday 19th February

12th December I was honoured to unveil a Civic Society blue plaque to commemorate Dame Sidney Jane Browne at her former address 11 Tivoli Road, where she lived during her retirement until her death in 1941.

Dame Sidney was the first president of the Royal College of Nursing and famously said: "Put a high ideal before you, and do your future service in a greater strength than your own, and your life will be for the betterment of the world."

On Christmas Day, my husband and I spent time at the Open Door Christmas Shelter speaking with people who were there enjoying the good food and company. I would like to place on record my thanks to Open Door and all those who support them to put this annual shelter on to bring Christmas cheer to those in need.

In January I was pleased to be invited to celebrate the role Cheltenham Specsavers has played in the Going the Extra Mile project. The GEM Project aims to support individuals in Gloucestershire who are dealing with circumstances that are potential barriers to work and move these people closer towards education, training, volunteering or work, including self-employment. It was great to hear from employees at Specsavers who have been helped into work by the Gem project about how much they enjoy their roles within this local optician.

At the end of January I gave a reading at the thanksgiving service for former Cllr and Alderman Gill Wakely. I didn't know Gill through the council but I used to speak to him at his allotment in Leckhampton when walking my youngest son to school. He was always really friendly and kindly when we talked to him and it was a real honour to be part of the service of thanksgiving for his life.

Pitch @ Palace came to Cheltenham Racecourse on 2nd February. The Duke of York founded Pitch@Palace in 2014, recognising the profound role that Entrepreneurship is playing, and will continue to play in the future of the United Kingdom and Global economy. Pitch@Palace supports Entrepreneurs by providing them with the best opportunities to access mentors and advisers, distribution systems and supply chains, connections and investment. It was a great event and really interesting pitches from the entrepreneurs.

On 8th February I welcomed Jill and Syrita from Asda Cheltenham to receive a cheque for £200 for the mayor's charity as runners up in their charity green token scheme.

Last week I went to the Everyman to see Quartet, the charming tale of four ageing opera singers who reside in a magnificent retirement home in Kent. It was really funny with a very strong cast and great set. Quartet came to Cheltenham before the start of a National Tour and was part of the Everyman's new Chief Executive Mark

Goucher's strategy to make the theatre a touring production powerhouse. It was really interesting meeting the cast afterwards and particularly good to hear from them how highly the Everyman is regarded.

Yesterday 18th February was the anniversary of the horrific murder of Hollie Gazzard by her former boyfriend. The sadness of her loss is still felt so very much by her family, who are working so hard through the Hollie Gazzard Trust to create a legacy for her that will help support and empower other young people. My thoughts are with them.

Sadly what happened to Hollie is not an exceptional event; approximately 2 women are killed every week by a partner or former partner. The most dangerous time for a woman living in an abusive relationship is when she tries to end the relationship.

The next fundraising event for the Mayors Charity is my civic ball this Friday. We have around 120 people coming to this event and former Cllr Andrew Lansley's bands Thrill Collins are playing. Lionel Richie has donated two tickets for his upcoming tour to our auction and I would like to place on record my thanks to him for donating them and to my friend Dave Thomas for facilitating this.

Our Quiz Night in March has been sold out for some time but we are running a prize draw in the run up to that event with some great prizes. It would be lovely if colleagues would support the mayor's charity by buying a few tickets.