

Mayoral Report – 25 March '24

It's been a very busy but very enjoyable couple of weeks since our last meeting of full council.

Mayor of Margate's Climate Ball

On 16 March, it was my pleasure to attend the Mayor of Margate's Climate Ball, which was attended by various dignitaries along with the great and the good of Margate's community and arts scenes. I had a lovely conversation with Tracey Emin, who introduced herself after being delighted to discover that Broadstairs has a mayor!

The Lebanese-style food on the night was incredible but more importantly – was prepared and served by the young people training at A Perfect Place To Grow. This is a Cliftonville-based charity who support and train young chefs so they can forge careers in catering. Given the latest data that shows that 9% of Thanet's young people (rising to 11% in Cliftonville West) are currently classified as NEET – we should certainly be doing all we can to support organisations like this who are doing so much to support our young people.

Broadstairs Civic Service

We held our Civic service, to give thanks to those groups who do so much for our community. This was attended by representatives of various community groups such as Oasis, Twinning Society, the Town Team and CT10 Charities. We were joined by civic dignitaries from across East Kent and Medway who all commented on the wonderful church of St. Peter's and on Pierremont Hall. Once again – I'd like to thank Kirsty, Abi and Mia for all their hard work on the day.

Youth engagement

You may have read in the news over the past few weeks that 29% (4.2m) of all UK children are now growing up in poverty and in the last year, an additional 350,000 children fell into the classification of living in absolute poverty. It's therefore incredibly important for us to double our efforts to engage with our young people to make them aware that at the very least – they have our support.

Last Thursday, Cllr Bright and I gave a talk on the work the Town Council does, to the Year 11s of Charles Dickens High School. After a slow start, they were incredibly engaged and we fielded some very good questions from them – particularly as it was at the end of their school day.

Along with meeting their school council, we have now spoken to all Charles Dickens 12-13 year olds and 15-16 year olds and have now established excellent links to this school. Cllr Bright is now working alongside them to put together a Broadstairs School Councils forum.

On Friday, we took our Town Council roadshow to East Kent College, to speak with their Inclusive Learning group about what the mayor and Town Council do. We used a more accessible version of our presentation and help Q&A sessions with every group. They were incredibly engaged and such lovely young people to be around and it was good to be able to show them that they have as much of a stake in our society as anyone.

Thanet Festival Showcase

On Friday, we attended the showcase event of the Thanet Festival at the Sarah Thorne theatre – which I think is wildly underappreciated as a venue.

Accompanied by the mayors of Ramsgate and Margate, it was a pleasure to watch our incredibly talented young people perform so wonderfully. My highlight was seeing my son's friend, who is an 18 stone semi-professional prop forward, play the most beautifully delicate piece on the piano. You wouldn't know he was capable of something like that to look at him.

It's worth noting that there's been a shortage of instrumentalists entering for the past couple of years – so if any councillors or their families play anything – there may be a trophy in it for you!