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August 2020 - Issue 341

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**Cornwall Councillors –
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Tamar Bridge

From the Mayor of Saltash

When I was first elected to Saltash Town Council as one of four Councillors representing the Saltash East Ward, back in 2017, it truly had never occurred to me to stand for office such as Deputy Mayor, or even Mayor.

I had stood to fill the vacancy in a by-election and was delighted to secure two thirds of the vote when standing against one other candidate.

I had always been the sort of person who would walk around the Town and think to myself “why did they do that” or “why can’t they make this happen”?

When the vacancy occurred, I thought to myself that it was now or never, so I put myself forward for



election. The rest, as they say, is history.

Fast forward to 2019 and with more than a little encouragement from other Councillors, I found myself

being elected as Deputy Mayor to play a supportive role to the new Mayor for 2019-20, Cllr Gloria Challen.

Gloria is well known and loved around the Town and I have thoroughly enjoyed the role I played as Deputy Mayor, a position that is sometimes regarded as an apprenticeship and I certainly learned a lot from Gloria during her term of office.

So, after a delay in electing a new Mayor for the year 2020-21, due to Covid-19, I found myself being elected to the role of Mayor, something that is a highlight of my life, up there with the birth of my twin sons and also meeting and marrying my second wife Brenda, who has given me a huge amount of support and encouragement.

The former Mayor, Gloria,

will be a very hard act to follow, as she has done a huge amount of good and put in a tremendous amount of work for the benefit of Saltash and its residents.

My first official engagement was to attend a birthday party for a lovely resident of the Town, Thelma Bishop, on the occasion of her 104th birthday. I thoroughly enjoyed being plied with cups of tea whilst chatting with Thelma and her family and friends. Summoning up supreme willpower, I did manage to resist the cake and scones on offer (scone, that rhymes with phone, not scone that rhymes with gone – cream on top, of course!).

The following day, on 15th August, I attended the RBL ceremony to commemorate VJ Day, to lay a wreath on behalf of Saltash Town

Council, at the St Nicholas and St Faith War Memorial, along with my Mayoress and accompanied by the new Deputy Mayor, Cllr Julie Rance, who also laid a wreath.

Wreaths were also laid in the Peace Garden and at St Stephen’s War Memorial, Andy Rance recording the moments using what I described as a ‘proper’ camera. Thanks, Andy.

With the current pandemic, it is unlikely that I will attend the number of functions that are usually attended by the Town Mayor, but nonetheless I will perform my role with pride and represent the Town to the very best of my ability.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my fellow Councillors who unanimously bestowed this great honour upon me.

It is good to see so many businesses in Saltash emerge from the lockdown and to welcome new businesses to the Town, to whom I wish every success.

Looking ahead, plans are well advanced for the traditional Remembrance Day Parade and Church Service, which is scheduled to take place on November 8th when it is intended that the day will be marked in the closest way to normality that can be achieved under the current circumstances. It is also intended that the two minute silence will take place as usual on November 11th.

During the coming months I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible – in a socially distanced way, of course. Kindest Regards
Cllr Pete Samuels
Mayor of Saltash 2020-21

Emergency Licensing Determination Procedure Pavement Licensing

Saltash Town Council is responsible for making recommendations on Pavement Licence Applications to Cornwall Council as the Licensing Authority, within the statutory time scales.

A Pavement Licence is granted by the Local Authority, which allows the licence-holder to place removable furniture over certain highways adjacent to the premises in relation to which the application was made, for certain purposes.

The Government has now announced a new fast-track application service which will be put in place with a very limited timescale. From the date after the application is received from Cornwall Council until the applicant’s notice of determination, there will be a period of only 7 days. Link to Pavement Licensing Webpage, Cornwall Council: <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/licences-and-street-trading/pavement-licensing/>

For the purposes of a Pavement Licence, an eligible business is one that uses (or proposes to use) premises for the sale of food or drink for consumption (on or off the premises). These may include, public houses, cafes, bars, restaurants, snack bars, coffee shops and ice cream parlours including where such uses form an ancillary aspect of another use, for example supermarkets, or entertainment venues which sell food and drink.

This streamlined process is being put in place to allow businesses to secure these licences in time for the summer. This will provide much needed income over the summer months and protect as many hospitality jobs as possible. Social distancing measures will remain in place.

These licences may be granted for a minimum of three months or for a maximum of one year, but not beyond 30th September 2021.

Where a Pavement Licence is granted, clear access routes on the highway will need to be maintained, taking into account the needs of all users, including disabled people.

The Town Council’s response regarding Pavement Licensing applications will therefore be determined electronically and within the necessary time restrictions. In order to meet this timescale, there will be a short period of time in which both Councillors may respond and for the Public to make representations. It is anticipated that this may be as little as one day.

The procedure will be as follows:

1. Pavement Licensing Applications will be received from Cornwall Council and then uploaded to Saltash Town Council’s Planning Applications Webpage. https://www.saltash.gov.uk/planning_applications.php Dependent upon deadlines the public are asked to submit their comments by email to planning@saltash.gov.uk to include the Licence Application number in their response submission. However, it is strongly recommended that public comments are also sent to Cornwall Council via licensing@cornwall.gov.uk Public comments received within the deadline will be circulated to Councillors for their consideration. Public comments received by Councillors will be in accordance with GDPR and will not contain any personal information unless the member of the public has expressly requested his or her details to be included. Public comments received within the deadline, will be uploaded onto the website in compliance with GDPR.
2. Saltash Town Council’s decision will be forwarded to Cornwall Council and then uploaded, together with Councillor responses onto the Town Council’s Planning Webpage.
3. At present, Cornwall Council have advised that there will be no appeals process. End of Press Release.

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Tel.: 01752 844846 Email: enquiries@saltash.gov.uk Website: www.saltash.gov.uk**

Deputy Mayor of Saltash

In my new role as Deputy Mayor of Saltash I’ve been thinking about what’s important to me, particularly during these unprecedented times. But what’s important to you?

Over the last few months some of our priorities may have changed but something that hasn’t is I believe the importance of people loved ones and near and far, neighbours and friends as well as people we don’t know. These last few months have been a real challenge to us all particularly in terms of the distancing and I really don’t like the term social distancing

because we are social beings and we want to be socially close to people. Physical distancing has been necessary but I have seen some amazing people supporting others during this time and have been humbled by the unselfish way people have come together and been socially close whilst maintaining physical distancing to help out wherever they have seen a need, I have been extremely proud to be part of this Town that I love. Over the coming months I hope to be able to have a positive impact as we move out of lockdown and meet as many of you as possible.

Best wishes

*Councillor Julie Rance
Deputy Mayor of Saltash
2020-21*

Meet Your Councillor

Councillor Averil Pinckney South Ward Saltash

Averil Rose Pinckney lived in Portsmouth up until 2015 when she moved to Saltash, the Town she is now proud to call home and where she is one of four Councillors representing the South Ward on Saltash Town Council. Averil is Co-Chairman of the Joint Burial Board Committee which oversees the maintenance and operations of St Stephen’s Churchyard.

Averil has 40 years of Nursing experience and is the founder of the Eva’s Little Stars Foundation, named after her first grandchild, who was sadly lost to stillbirth. The Foundation helps other families who have suffered the same tragic loss.

Averil is a familiar face around the Town and is well known for her support of various charities and good causes. During the past winter, she was to be found at the Maurice Huggins Room in Victoria Gardens, where she organised distribution of warm clothing and footwear to those who could make good use of the donated items, at no cost.

A member of the Lions Club, Averil also works alongside the Domestic Abuse Team, has organised a monthly ‘Saltash Chat and Help’ for older residents in the days before lockdown, is organising a ‘baby bank’ to supply families with items for their babies, volunteers in a local shop and regularly assists with litter picks. As if that isn’t already an impressive list for the work that Averil does in her own time, she is shortly to become involved in a local Neighbourhood Watch Scheme.

Averil can be contacted via the Saltash Town Council website www.saltash.gov.uk



**STAY ALERT
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Chamber Chairman Peter Ryland - Keeping us Updated...

Over the last few weeks, I have spoken with many business owners, both in Fore Street and on the industrial estates. Many of them told me that Covid has given them time to assess their business activities and reformat their trading pitch to clients/customers. Further, the general consensus seems to be that the situation emerging out of lockdown is not as bad as they feared it was going to be. A couple of businesses even said they had enjoyed their best trading week ever in the last few weeks. There is no doubt that the road ahead is going to be bumpy for some businesses, but currently the signs are that the local economy is picking up from the sharp decline during lockdown.

But we should be careful not to be complacent, as there are businesses which are struggling and just surviving. We only have to look at the national press to see how, on an almost daily basis, there are reports of businesses closing down in all sectors, including manufacturing, retail and hospitality. There will probably be further impact when furlough finishes and the business rates holiday comes to an end. One thing that is certain, though, is that with the debt the country has built up to fund these schemes and the other costs of Covid we will all, through our taxes, be paying for it for many years to come. I read a few weeks ago that we have only just paid back some of the bonds that the Government took out to fund recovery after World War Two. Will it take the country 75 years to pay for Covid, I wonder?

Reverting to Saltash, I was invited to a preview evening at the new Micropub, The Cockleshell,

on Fore Street. What pleasant surroundings for an early evening drink with local ales, ciders and spirits. I like the way that a lot of the fittings use recycled items, and the standing table created from a cable reel is especially spectacular. It is an excellent addition to the other pubs in the town, and I am sure will help the evening economy.

Another new unit in Fore Street is Nicky's Beads, who have been trading from home for several years but now feel it is time to move to a shop. I am pleased that both of these businesses have confidence in the future of Fore Street, and I hope that the people of Saltash will support them, along with the other local businesses in the town.

Finally, on behalf of the Chamber, I would like to congratulate Peter Samuels on being elected Mayor for 2020/2021 by his fellow councillors. In these difficult times it will, no doubt, be a challenging role. Good luck, Pete!

Town is Well Prepared for 'New Normal'

Newly chosen Mayor of Saltash Peter Samuels has had the unique experience of serving for fifteen months as Deputy Mayor – ten of them following the usual practices of Saltash Town Council and the final five months under most unusual, indeed unprecedented circumstances. How has this helped put him in good stead to serve as Mayor until next May and to help ensure the town and town council run smoothly? The Observer interviewed him together with his Mayoress, wife and fellow Councillor Brenda, two days after he took on the Mayoral chain, though without any of the ceremonial procedures that have always previously taken place.

Becoming Mayor in the year of Covid 19 marks just one stage of what Peter Samuels describes as an 'incredible journey' from an upbringing beyond the eastern fringes of the City of London. Longing for a country lifestyle led him to the New Forest where, following the tragic death of his first wife, he met true Cornishwoman Brenda. Following their marriage, the decision was made to return to her Cornish roots and to Saltash where, over the past ten years they have lived and built up together a highly successful business. Brenda, herself from Redruth had a variety of jobs including being only the second female 'person from the Prudential' in Britain. Involvement in Rotary led to their becoming interested in local affairs, he becoming a Councillor in 2017 and she in 2018.

While acknowledging the negatives created by the pandemic upon the council and the role of Mayor, Peter and Brenda see some positives. 'Covid 19 has brought the situation more into focus and brought matters forward,' Peter began. He considered that councillors had coped extremely well under unusual circumstances. While most councillors miss face to face meetings, they soon accepted that these would not be possible for the foreseeable future. Zoom he described as 'a godsend' which has in some ways made for a more efficient council as members log in from home. There has been more participation in meetings that there would normally have been, he believes, and members have become more aware of how much time people give over to civic affairs.

It has been a real challenge for the town council to engage with staff, to keep them on track, motivated and safe. 'If we did not have a good staff basis we would struggle as a council, fortunately we possess an extremely excellent and professional team. There is no problem that we have not got around and this is an



Photo Ian Robinson

amazing feat'.

For his term as Mayor under the present circumstances he anticipates 'trying to achieve the achievable under difficult circumstances'. The council will do as much as possible to continue traditionally and as in normality while keeping to changing Covid regulations.

In particular he aims to get devolution on track, this had stalled not – he emphasises as a result of lack of enthusiasm by Saltash council but due to Cornwall having other priorities. Now Saltash is fixed to take back more of its powers and hopefully there should be positive news on this shortly.

The easing of lockdown could be positive for local business, he believes, especially with the one hour on street parking extended until October and, if negotiations with Cornwall are successful, for longer. With the council sanitisers on the street and other safety measures in place, as well as new businesses opening to replace those lost, the new Mayor intends to do all possible to promote local businesses – including the many that are outside Fore Street and on the town's periphery. The number of planning applications for these has been encouraging.

On the down side the Mayor and Mayoress have

missed visiting other councils, as they did a considerable amount during their first ten months as Deputy Mayor and Mayoress. The communication and interaction with other councils was good for all, and he also misses the opportunity to represent Saltash outside the town. Sadly, the community events which the Mayor traditionally attends and which draw the town together are on hold, with no Mayfair, Regatta, or the much anticipated VE Day Anniversary celebrations. There has to be less contact with local people, such as attending schools, residential homes and anniversaries, though the Mayor is seeking to adapt on these enjoyable functions.

'When differences have forced us to adapt, over the last five months, we have done so successfully and I am confident that, having gained experience over this time, we will continue to do so', our new Mayor concluded

My Apologies

I am truly sorry if your copy has not made the pages of the Observer this month

We are continuing to publish as a Community Service, Covid 19 has to take priority

Editor Mary Crawford

Stay Alert

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Volunteering Opportunities

If you can spare a few hours a week to help your community, we have a number of volunteer opportunities;

- Become a Digital Champion, and help people benefit from technology and the internet.
- Help out in our friendly Community Hub on Fore St.
- Dementia Voice; All the groups will be recommencing as soon as government guidelines allow.
- Community Transport will be back soon, & we need drivers for our Hopper buses..

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Green and Brown Energy

Cornwall Council is placing the climate emergency at the heart of its Covid recovery plans, and we are delighted to share two of the Council's innovative environmental projects with Observer readers.

First is the construction of Cornwall's first smart-grid wind turbine. Rotor blades spanning 40m in length have been fitted to the 2.3 MW turbine at Ventonteaque - the first to be built in Cornwall since 2016 and the only one to be installed in the South West this year. Cornwall Council has made a £3m commercial investment into the wind turbine and will operate it once construction is complete. It is set to start supplying renewable energy to more than 1,400 Cornish homes from September, reducing Cornwall's greenhouse gas emissions by more than 3,300 tonnes a year over the next two decades.

Second is the construction of specialised slurry lagoons on six of the dairy farms owned by Cornwall Council. If methane isn't captured from decaying manure and slurry it escapes in to the air as 'fugitive emissions', which are damaging to the atmosphere as a greenhouse gas. Cornwall Council is working with a Cornish company that has invented an ingenious method of converting these fugitive emissions to biomethane. In this pilot project, the biomethane will be sold to Cormac to fuel a fleet of 77 biogas trucks. Cornwall Council hopes the pilot will demonstrate that the capital investment can provide a commercial return, and enable a roll out across all dairy farms in Cornwall - and wider.

Don't Lose Your Voice

Every year, Cornwall Council is required by law to carry out a canvass of residents to ensure that their electoral registration details are up to date.

Making sure that everyone who is entitled to vote is able to do so is a cornerstone of our democracy. It's especially important with elections due to take place in May 2021 for Cornwall Council and town and parish councils, but it is a complex logistical challenge, made even more complicated this year because of Covid-19.

For the first time ever, Cornwall Council will be contacting some households by email instead of sending a paper form in the post. If you get an email from us, please respond to it, even if it is to tell us you've moved. Making sure you respond to an email or letter is particularly helpful in the current public health situation, as it will help avoid the need for home visits from canvassers, and will save Cornwall Council a lot of money that can be used instead for other essential services.

Any residents with questions are invited to contact the registration team at voter.registration@cornwall.gov.uk or call on 0300 123 1115.

Free School Meals

Do you have a child returning to school in September who you think may have become eligible for Free School Meals since the end of the summer term? Apply to Cornwall Council now and you could also be eligible for summer holiday food vouchers, although we are unable to backdate any claims.

Cornwall Council is also processing applications for children starting school in September. We will respond within three working days of receiving your application to let you know the outcome.

Anyone who has been eligible for Free School Meals at any point since 1 April 2018 will remain eligible throughout the Universal Credit Rollout period, which is scheduled to continue until summer 2023. This will apply even if your earnings increase above the threshold. And any child currently entitled to Free School Meals at primary school who is moving on to secondary school will automatically have their entitlement transferred to their new school.

Check your eligibility and apply online at www.cornwall.gov.uk/schoolmeals. If you are unable to apply online, please call 01872 323298 and a member of the Free School Meals team will call you back to complete the application over the phone.

Planetary Health is Key

The focus of last year's Annual Report of Cornwall Council's Director of Public Health was on the impact of poverty on children's health. This year's Report is a call to action to reconnect with our planet and protect it, warning that behaviours that damage the health of the planet may also be damaging our own future health. Without a change, it cautions, a child born today will face a world that is, on average, 4°C warmer by their 71st birthday - putting their health under threat for a range of reasons, including extreme weather, pollution and psychological stress.

The Annual Reports are professional statements about the health of local communities, useful to both professionals and the public in improving the health and wellbeing of local populations. After an introduction about the history of planetary health, this year's Report explores the evidence of environmental degradation in topics such as water and food. Chapter 7 talks about the transmission of disease, and how Covid-19 has shown that human activity can lead to the emergence of new diseases.

As well as looking at the bigger picture, the 76-page Report drills down to the local level and assesses the impact on communities in Cornwall. Chapter 4 on air, for example, talks about nitrogen dioxide levels being monitored at 9 sites in Cornwall and particulate air matter levels being monitored in Camborne and Saltash.

The Report notes that programmes such as the BBC's 'Blue Planet' and the mobilisation of thousands of young people in support of Greta Thunberg have crystallised a shared concern about the damage that is being done to our earth, but warns that while public awareness has increased, the evidence of sustainable change in human behaviour is less obvious.

As we continue our recovery from Covid-19, Cornwall Council has committed to placing climate change at the heart of all our decisions. The recommendations in this Report make sobering but insightful reading in our journey.



Proudly Supporting Those Who Serve

As Cornwall and the nation marked VJ Day, Cornwall Council was proud to become one of the first employers in Cornwall to be recognised with a prestigious Gold Award under the Ministry of Defence's Employer Recognition Scheme.

The Armed Forces represent an important and highly valued part of Cornwall with over 3,000 serving personnel and approximately 39,000 veterans living here. Cornwall Council is among 127 organisations in the country, and one of only two in Cornwall, to be awarded the prestigious Gold Award.

As an employer, Cornwall Council has set up arrangements that support staff to serve as members of the Reserve Forces; developed policies in our Housing and Children's services to reflect the specific needs of the Armed Forces community; and hosts the veterans outreach service in Cornwall, providing information and advice to the military community and their families on a wide range of issues.

Colonel Craig Hampton Stone, commanding officer of the 165 Port & Maritime Regiment at Derriford, said: "As the Army lead for civil engagement in Cornwall, I am delighted that Cornwall Council has been accredited with Gold status. Having worked closely with the Council, I have personally witnessed their genuine care and huge investment in the military community, providing outstanding support to both the serving personnel and veterans within the county."

Sitting next to the Forces bases in Plymouth, Saltash is home to many Service families, and our schools promote MKC Heroes, a national support group for children of Service men and women. It is always a joy to see the Saltash MKC Heroes standard being carried at local civic events. Thank you to all those who serve and to their families.

Keeping GP Practices Safe

Since the onset of Covid-19, GP practices in Saltash and East Cornwall have been working hard to control the virus and minimise the associated risks. There have been plenty of changes to the ways patients are assessed, with video and E-consultations introduced to supplement the 'traditional' phone call assessments.

Patients will only be invited for a face to face consultation if it is felt they need a clinical assessment. Any patients who are displaying Covid-like symptoms and need a face to face consultation will be asked to attend the Liskeard Hot Hub. The aim of this collaboration between the GP practices in East Cornwall is to keep local practices clear of Covid.

The capacity in waiting rooms has been significantly reduced, and practices such as Saltash Health Centre are asking patients to go back and wait in their cars after they have checked in for their appointment. Once you've been invited in to the building, there is plenty of alcohol gel and you'll be asked to wear a mask. There are face coverings available for people who forget to bring their own, and some practices are selling hand-made masks for charity. The clinician will be wearing full PPE, including an apron, gloves and a mask, sometimes also a visor or goggles.

Remember that if you need urgent care, you can ring the new NHS number 111 at any time of day or night. The experienced staff will give you healthcare advice or direct you to the local service that can help you best.

All of these measures are helping to manage the flow of patients and reducing the risk of infection, keeping patients and staff as safe as possible in these extreme times.



Cllr Hilary Frank:
hilary.frank@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk



Cllr Derek Holley:
derek.holley@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk



Cllr Sam Tamlin:
sam.tamlin@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk



Cllr Sheila Lennox-Boyd:
sheila.lennox-boyd@cornwallcouncillors.org.uk

Useful Contacts

- Cornwall Council's COVID-19 information page: www.cornwall.gov.uk/coronavirus
- Queries relating to Coronavirus: covid19@cornwall.gov.uk.
- Cornwall Council's Helpline for advice on employment: 0333 0150699
- To book a Coronavirus test: www.nhs.uk/coronavirus
- For guidance for businesses www.ciosgrowthhub.com
- For community safety: www.safercornwall.co.uk
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- To report a power cut, ring Western Power: 105 or 0800 6783 105



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Beware of Scams!

Following a recent spate of bogus food safety inspections in the Newquay area, Cornwall Council's Environmental Health team is now warning of a hoax caller in the Par area claiming to be a 'track and trace' official. The caller claimed a customer at the hairdressers had identified as positive for Covid-19 and requested they close their business.

Business owners should always get contact details from anyone claiming to be giving official information, and check their credentials by contacting Cornwall Council's Environmental Health and Trading Standards team on 0300 1234212 or send an email to businesscompliance@cornwall.gov.uk.

During this pandemic we've also seen criminals using sophisticated methods to callously exploit people's financial concerns, impersonating trusted organisations like the NHS or targeting people with official-looking emails offering a 'council tax reduction'. These emails, which use government branding, contain links that lead to a fake website to trick people into giving away their money or information.

If you think you have been a victim of fraud please report it to Action Fraud at <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk> or by calling 0300 123 2040.



Mayor Believes United Town Team to 'Make a Real Difference'

Continuing to bring together a variety of disparate groups and bodies to work together for the good of the town is a priority for our new Mayor and Mayoress Councillor Peter and Brenda Samuels. 'There have in the past been several attempts to bring various groups together but they have not achieved much' the Mayor told us.

The newly set up 'Town Team' which we outlined in your July 'Observer' is totally different he believes. 'This time all members have the determination to succeed and have the opportunity to make a real difference.'

The new Mayoress who serves on the town team with other town and Cornwall Councillors, Chamber of Commerce and Community Interest Company members, added, 'There are lots of fantastic ideas and enthusiasm for starting to work together where previously various organisations went off in separate directions.'

There have been several meetings held under a varying 'rolling chairperson', an innovation that works well. Since the group came together bringing individual ideas for the betterment of

the town, there has been a general consensus of what everyone wants to see. They are now working forward to consider how to implement the various ideas.

There has traditionally been some bad feeling from town councillors towards a Truro based Cornwall Council. Mayor Peter Samuels believes now that 'we will work happily with Cornwall when they are getting it right and criticise when they are getting it wrong'.

One of the first practical issues before the town team is how to make Victoria Gardens, at the top of Fore Street, more of a community asset and we are reporting separately on this. We look forward to reporting further on schemes from the united town team as they move towards fruition.

Once Derelict Station Now an Asset to Saltash

The railway station building is a wonderful asset to Saltash, claimed Councillor Gloria Challen when she cut the opening ribbon as her last official engagement as Mayor of Saltash. The opening ceremony was brief and attended only by socially distanced Town Councillors and their spouses, the intention being to hold a full opening with the sponsors and others represented when circumstances permit.

The opening had concluded many years of work by a town council determined to acquire and restore the long derelict building, Councillor Challen recalled. It had been purchased in 2017 and a select group of councillors led by Richard Bickford had worked tirelessly at obtaining grants from various sources to bring the work to a conclusion and see the building restored to former glory as well as being a useful community asset.

Councillor Bickford, in thanking all councillors for their support, referred to previous councils' unsuccessful attempts to achieve the same objective. This council had succeeded and as well as all of his fellow councillors he wished to thank in particular his wife Sarah, Councillor Bill Phillips, and Sonia Emmett, on the Council Staff who had managed to work out the figures and finances for the project. "This will be a great asset for the town to enjoy over many years to come", he concluded.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Mary,
I wish to thank the wonderful residents and organisations of Saltash who have over the past 14 months supported my wife Councillor Gloria Challen as Mayor of Saltash.

When Gloria became Mayor, and following sincere family discussions, and other considerations at that time, I decided not to take up the role of Mayor's Consort.

That said, I, and our two siblings, Lewis and Lauren, have been on her quite extraordinary journey, and stood shoulder to shoulder with Gloria as Mayor of Saltash throughout.

Many organisations have welcomed Gloria and me into their folds, and indeed homes with embracing arms, and we both feel that we will continue to keep alive those friendships and camaraderie's.

As my wife once said at a Civic Service: "There has been, and will continue to be challenges ahead." There were those challenges and Saltash Town Council rose to, and above those tests.

Lauren, Lewis and I would like to say a huge thank you to all those that kindly supported Gloria throughout her Mayorship and indeed, to Cornwall Councillor Derek Holley who has worked with, and advised and encouraged Gloria, in her role as a Saltash Town Councillor and beyond.

Thank you to Mary too, and the Saltash Observer for featuring each month, Gloria's contribution to the life of Saltash through the Mayor's Column.

Yours sincerely
Neil Challen

Two things in this article: the first I know you'll appreciate because it's why I hate county democracy, and as for the second, well I know some people have been waiting years to say it to me. It's this: "On yer bike, Holley!"

Is the first true? Or is it that today I am full of democratic bile after a planning meeting this morning that didn't go the way I wanted. The application was for a large, modern house for a farmer, right on the top of Rame Head, in a field opposite the coastguard cottages, and just down from the coastguard station. Everything about the debate and the voting was perfectly fair and the justification from a farming point of view was all there and understandable. So why am I in a democratic tiz?

Cornwall Council planners recommended that the application should be refused, taking the view that the protection and preservation of the AONB (the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) was so important for succeeding generations that it trumped other considerations on this truly iconic site.

Democracy won the day with seven councillors voting in favour of the building and six, including myself, against. I am deeply saddened by the result, and I have already since this morning received two email representations from upset residents, who must have been following it on the internet. But it was democracy in action and I'll have to live with it. Good luck to the successful applicant, I'm sure he'll enjoy living there.

"On yer bike, Holley!" Last week I took great pleasure in biking up the newly finished section of cycle path between the traffic lights at Burraton and the fire station. It is honestly the first time I've ever felt safe riding up that bit of road and I'm really looking forward to when the rest of it is finished. Two residents have said how good the job is and I have passed that on. There are lots of odd bits still to go, though, and there are three



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For Observer readers
Derek Holley
Cornwall Councillor, Saltash East.
dholley@cornwall.gov.uk



teams working hard to finish off the pavement widening and other works. However, at the end of last week I had two complaints and one more today that something was wrong: there are beautiful, white painted pictures of bikes on the newly-widened pavements, but no pictures of pedestrians, and people were wondering if now pedestrians had to go on the other side of the road.

I'm coming to the bit you will like, and I mean really like. I wrote and asked the lead officer why there were no nice, white painted pictures of people on the pavements, along with the bikes. Well, I already knew that the all the permitted signs that can be used on UK roads are in a Manual for Streets appendix which is effectively... wait for it... an EU directorate publication for all Europe to abide by. Guess what's not in

it and can't be painted on pavements? Yes: people! The officer kindly said he could make an appeal to the Department of Transport in London, but said they would turn it down, as we obey the rules if no other country does (he didn't say that last bit). So there we are - but all is not lost. The kind officer is putting up a number of permitted blue people signs on poles and when they go up you can walk without fear on our wonderful new cycle paths. Until then don't you dare.... I was joking there.

But what is not a joke is that I've discovered to my cabbages' cost there is a moth species (which likes cabbages, and my cabbages in particular, for breakfast) that is small enough to get through the 7mm mesh on my wonderful new, huge anti-butterfly cage. I just cannot believe it. I repeat: I CANNOT believe it!

2020 Day Trips & Holidays
'with local pick-ups'

<p>September Thursday 10th – Clarkes Village £25.00 per person</p> <p>Wednesday 30th - Exmouth & Sidmouth £18.00 per person</p> <p>October Saturday 10th – Gloucester Quays £28.00 per person</p> <p>Sunday 25th – Sunday Mystery £18.00 per person</p> <p>November Friday 6th – Exeter & Ikea £10.00 per person (Special Price)</p> <p>Saturday 21st – Swindon Designer Outlet £25.00 per person</p> <p>December Saturday 5th – Bristol Shopper £20.00 (Special Price)</p> <p>Sunday 6th Longleat Festival of Lights £57.00 Adult / £54.00 Seniors £50.00 Child (3-15)</p> <p>Sunday 20th Christmas "Train of Lights" £38.00 Adult - £28.50 Child - £36.50 Senior</p>	<p>Holidays Longleat Festival of Lights & Bristol Shopper Departing: Friday 27th November Returning: Sunday 29th November 2020 2 Nights Accommodation, Dinner, B&B at the 4 Star Holiday Inn Filton £219.00 Per Person. <i>*Supplements may apply</i></p> <p>New Year in Bournemouth Departing: Wednesday 30th December 20 Returning: Saturday 2 January 2021 3 Nights Accommodation, Dinner, B&B & New Year Gala Dinner at the 3 Star Trouville Hotel. £425.00 Per Person, including day excursion (Day Two) <i>*Supplements may apply</i></p>
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www.tamarcoaches.co.uk

Waterside Revisited...

Back in the November 2019 issue of the Saltash Observer, I bemoaned at some length the neglected state of our Waterside.

Overlooking the busy Union pub, I live barely a gull's swoop from the high-water mark. I spoke of abandoned hulks, dumped garden waste and bent and broken railings and lights... and invisible Wardens! Little change prompted an email to Cornwall Council, who responded promptly and helpfully.

Boat disposal costs £450 per ton... Covid 19 has delayed action but 5 are imminently targeted. I'd heard that St. Budeaux volunteers maintain their foreshore; Cornwall Council inform me that it's the same in Truro and, although we are overseen by Plymouth as a port authority, they'd support me with bags, gloves and rubbish disposal if I wanted to organise something.

I chat to dog walkers and strollers daily who love it

here... one senior gentleman even told me that historically Lawrence of Arabia loved these waters in his RAF Mountbatten days! We're in honoured company... let's get cleaning up.

Anyone interested in getting involved, contact me on www.oldminehouse@gmail.com



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Thank You & Farewell

That time of year has come once again when we sadly say farewell to several of our brilliant team of Saltash Observer deliverers. Having, in some cases, been part of our friendly delivery team through their teenage years, they are now off to university or otherwise out into the world. We thank them and wish them well.

While our existing team is endeavouring to cover for them this does leave vacancies. Anyone from teenager to senior citizen who enjoys exercise, or any age between, who would like to give a few hours a month to getting out onto the streets of Saltash and helping ensure that every home received our popular paper is invited to contact Mary.

In particular new deliverers would be welcome in Landrake and Hatt areas as well as around the Saltash area.

We are proud to be the only local news source that kept up our regular delivery to each door throughout the recent Covid crisis lockdown. If you are interested in ensuring that the Observer continues to reach all of its keen readership, and to enjoy some outdoor exercise in so doing, call 07971 484872 or email Mary on

E: maryecrawford@hotmail.com

We look forward to hearing from you.

J. HALL

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Conundrum Corner

Taking the initial letters to the one-word answers to the following ten questions can you re-arrange them to make a Cornish place name?

- 1 What name is given to a crisp golden-brown pancake with deep indentations on both sides? (6)
- 2 What was the name of Henry VIII's elder brother? (6)
- 3 The film The Lavender Hill Mob was made in which Studio? (6)
- 4 Which German-born Composer is buried in Westminster Abbey? (6)
- 5 Which fictional character was created by Edgar Rice Burroughs? (6)
- 6 Which is the tallest Cathedral in England? (9)
- 7 What type of creature is a Mud Dauber? (4)
- 8 What did God create as a symbol that He would never again send a flood to destroy the World? (7)
- 9 The Bermuda Triangle is situated in which Ocean? (8)
- 10 The Derby and the Oaks are Horse races run on which Course? (5)

Answers on page 7

Have Your Say on Town Library

As well as providing all services essential to a modern library Saltash Town Council is eager to see the centrally situated building serve as an active community hub. Now all residents are being encouraged to put forward their views as to how this can best be achieved.

The town acquired the library from Cornwall Council in 2019 and subsequently the council agreed to seek a public works loan of up to £200,000 to refurbish the 1960's building, subject to consultation as to how local residents would like to see the building adapted for full community use.

Since the town took it over a library committee has been building on a programme of events and activities for all age groups from pre-school to seniors. It is intended to continue and expand on these once circumstances permit.

One scheme which would help to attract more groups and individuals is to provide food and drink for visitors to enjoy while relaxing perhaps with a library book either within the building or on the patio.

The little used mezzanine floor above could be used to provide office space for Town Council staff for whom currently private offices are

rented, thus off setting costs to the council taxpayer.

In order to obtain full public opinion, leaflets have been distributed, highlighting proposals. Images of the current vision for the library including 3D floor plans are available on the Town Council website www.saltash.gov.uk and questionnaires may be returned online via the website or by mail or by hand to the library or the Guildhall. They should be received on or before midnight on 7th September.

Party Destruction at Nature Reserve

Burning hay bales, broken glass and an array of rubbish was left behind on a popular beauty spot and nature reserve on the edge of Saltash.

Up to a hundred and fifty teenagers and young people were reported to have gathered on a warm August day at Churchtown Farm, and left a trail of desolation behind them. Those who regularly visit the Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve to enjoy its beauty and tranquillity were disgusted to discover the remnants of the gathering. Fire appliances attended and police were informed. Dog walkers were especially concerned at the threat of broken glass to their pets.

Disturbances were also reported from young people gathering on the Waterside where flags were torn down and there was a report of an assault on a local resident.

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SHERYLL MURRAY MP WRITES...



I appreciate that it has been difficult to maintain the service level expected during the Pandemic but as tourism opens up it is important that we leave visitors with a good impression. There is no doubt that a lot of these guests are on a "staycation". That is to say that many who normally fly off to foreign countries are staying in the UK to avoid restrictions. This new market is important to the hard hit tourism industry and I feel it is important that we give them a good impression.

One resident alerted me to a number of what appeared to be abandoned boats on Saltash waterfront. I would like to thank Cllr Sheila Lennox-Boyd for taking the time to investigate these for me and for joining me in raising this issue with the authorities. It appears some had signs on them dated back to the 1st November 2019 saying that if the authorities are not contacted that "an abandonment procedure will be implemented and this vessel will be removed and disposed of".

There are many other issues which have some to the fore recently including toilet closures and areas where the litter has not been collected. I am keen to show off our County to its very best. I would like to thank our local Councillors for all they are doing and would encourage people to contact either them or me if you see a problem that you think should be resolved. You can ring my office on 01579 344428 or email me directly on

sheryll@sheryllmurray.com
I was pleased to hear last week that both Derriford and Treiske Hospitals are due to get extra government funding so they can cope with the busy Winter period which is likely to have the added complication of a Pandemic this year. In Derriford Hospital in Plymouth the Trust awarded £4million to upgrade facilities ahead of winter. This investment will allow for the expansion and reconfiguration of Acute Assessment Unit – benefits include increased space to accommodate the first stages of the Emergency Department (ED) journey; increased space for ambulance handover; and increased effectiveness of streaming decisions away from ED. This also allows the collocation of the Frailty team, who are focussed on admission avoidance, to increase their collaboration. They also plan reconfiguration of current ED minors to provide additional majors cubicles. Finally there will be refurbishment of Lyd and Fal wards to increase the number of beds available and improve outward flow from the ED. Plans are currently being drawn up in a bid to get the work complete in time for January.

Recent Government figures show the scale of help that South East Cornwall has received. A total of 10,800 jobs were protected through the furlough scheme. A total of £13,600,000 was used to help the self employed. A total of £39,494,141 has been given in Bounce Back Loans for small companies.

Also £31,870,000 of business grants have been paid out. This really is an unprecedented level of support for South East Cornwall. I have visited some businesses recently who have told me how grateful they have been for this support and that they simply would not have survived otherwise. I would like to thank the government publically for this help to local people.

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Post Office Under Threat

The town's main post office, together with the large newsagents/food store in which it is situated, may be among the next shops to be lost to Saltash.

McCull's management, earlier this year, advised staff of their intention to close their major Fore Street shop as well as the smaller premises in Callington Road. This was to be before the end of this year and was as a result of reportedly low takings. The shops have remained open throughout the Covid crisis and management withdrew the threat of closure by December. However, they have made clear that closure is still an option for 2021.

The substantial premises have been a food store since the 1960's when Tall's independent supermarket was situated here.

When Saltash Post Office in Wesley Road was controversially closed, the post office facilities were re-sited in McCull's and have proved very busy with queues forming for much of the opening hours. The Post Office has subsequently become busier since all of the town's banks, except one, have closed and the post office has taken over some of their banking facilities. If McCull's closes the post office will close too. It is hoped that another store, possibly the Co-Op will take it on, or the town centre will for the first time since the 19th century have no post office. The Mayor is to write to the post office authority concerning its future.

This news follows last months announcement in the 'Observer' that Lloyds Chemist which had taken over the long-established local pharmacy of Underhill's, is targeted for closure.

It is not all bad news. Since lockdown, while a number of shops have closed permanently, at least five new businesses have opened or are set to re-open in Fore Street. They include a fruit and vegetable shop, café/Bistro, gift shop, community shop

Gardens Should be Resident Friendly Asset

The Victoria Gardens need to become a well-used community asset at the top end of town, and not a separate and often forgotten oasis cut off from Fore Street. This is the belief of our newly set up town team, as described elsewhere in your 'Observer'.

Saltash Litter Rangers

We need you! Saltash Litter Rangers project launches on 11th September and we're looking for dedicated volunteers to keep our local environment clean. Saltash Environmental Action (SEA) is recruiting volunteers to adopt their street and regularly pick up litter. Many residents already independently pick up the litter in their local area, and we want to encourage others to do the same, so the whole of Saltash is covered. SEA offers support - tools, public liability insurance, and tips on safety and a risk assessment. Want to become a Ranger? Go to SEA's Website www.seasaltash.org.uk and Facebook page facebook.com/seasaltash for more information. E-mail SEA at info@seasaltash.org.uk if you are willing to take part.

Please also let us know if you are already doing this independently - we don't want to duplicate effort.

Litter Rangers will be launched from 11th September as part of the wider 'Big Autumn Clean up' anti-litter campaign in Saltash, coinciding with the national campaign organised by Keep Britain Tidy, which runs from 11th to 27th September.

and local charity shop. It is well worth keeping an eye on the changing face of Fore Street shopping and remembering, if we wish to retain a lively and flourishing community and encourage businesses to remain, use our lovely local shops or risk losing them.

The gardens currently belong to Cornwall Council but it is intended that the town should acquire them under the next phase of devolution and already there are plans for improvement. An improved and widened entrance is suggested, though railings should remain to keep children safe. Ideally a pedestrian crossing near the Wesley Church should improve accessibility.

As part of a plan to make the garden an inclusive place to go extra seating is already planned. Long term post Covid proposals include town picnics and music events, possibly within a bandstand, all of which will enable the gardens to act as an extension of lively Fore Street. Local organisations could be invited to contribute to planting out the gardens as a contribution to making them fully resident friendly as well as bringing footfall into the town centre.

Cycle Lanes Spell Danger

Local motorists, including taxi drivers who regularly ply through Saltash, have expressed concern at cyclists being encouraged to ride against the flow of one-way traffic.

Culver Road, which is one way only to vehicles entering from Fore Street, now has a lane enabling cyclists to ride the other way. It is a narrow road and one local taxi operator has objected that, since many drivers take a wide swing to enter the road, this can endanger cyclist riding towards them into Fore Street. The danger, it was suggested, is even more acute at the entry to Lower Fore Street by the Guildhall whence motorist coming down Lower Fore Street and about to turn right will not be able to see cyclist coming out of the cycle lane which again goes against the one-way traffic flow.

Observer Telephone Numbers
07971484872
or 01579 345699

Tamar Reflections...

"If I should die, think only this of me: that there is a corner of a foreign field that is forever England." I thought that I would begin this column with the opening stanza of a famous wartime sonnet by the patriotic Rupert Brooke, because the years 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 have been and will again be marked with end-of-war anniversary commemorations, Acts of Remembrance, and Saltash Remembers projects and events. All paying tribute to those who sacrificed so much for our tomorrows; those who we will forever honour and to whom we will pay everlasting tribute and homage.

Also because that quite extraordinary poem rings constantly through my head every time my husband, John, and I walk around Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve and smell the freshly-cut grass, and witness such breath-taking beauty, with panoramic views for as far as the eye can see, embraced by the meandering River Lynher below.

This remarkable Nature Reserve, managed by Cornwall Wildlife Trust in partnership with the Friends of Churchtown Farm, has around a dozen named fields, leafy foot paths and meadows, all bursting at the seams with their individual

beauty of ancient trees, hedges, flowers, fauna and wildlife a plenty.

There, hidden behind the trees is the mainline railway track, with the mysterious rumbling sound of the Penzance train we listen out for by the hour, on our regular and enchanting visits.

The River Lynher of course is steeped in history as it hosted trials in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, carried out by HMS Defiance Torpedo Training Ship's School. The river was very useful as part of the curriculum of this School, with the firing of live explosive mines and Whitehead Torpedoes carried out up the river.

Churchtown Farm Community Nature Reserve is a "Jewel in the Crown" of Saltash, and right on our doorstep just off Wearde Road.

We see on our visits dozens of walkers in close-by fields and in the distant meadows, sometimes so far away they look like matchstick people in Lowry's paintings - quite beautifully haunting.

And Rupert Brooke's 'Soldier' concludes: "And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness, in hearts at peace, under an English Heaven."

Heavenly indeed!
Sue Hooper MBE

Conundrum Answers:
I Waffle 2 Arthur 3 Ealing 4

Handel 5 Tarzan 6 Salisbury 7 Wasp 8 Rainbow 9 Atlantic 10 Epsom Re-arranged the letters spell Hewaswater.

Following the planned refurbishment of the forecourt over the summer, Community Enterprises PL12 is now totally refurbishing the ground floor of the building to create a Covid-safe environment for volunteer advisers and public using Citizens Advice Cornwall (CAC).

The ground floor refurbishment has been mainly funded by a generous grant of £9700 from Saltash Town Council, who wished to ensure the service could resume its work in the town. The work has been planned and supervised by CEPL12 Director, Peter Ryland. A formal re-opening will take place later.

"We have been managing this building under a lease from Cornwall Council for more than 5 years" said CEPL12 Chair, Jo Baskott. "We want to be a good landlord, supportive of CAC, who will gradually be able to start 5-day a week opening using the new facilities. This will be a boost for ourselves, CAC and the Foodbank working together at the building to help local people with whatever problems life is putting their way".

Chief Executive of CAC, Gill Pipkin, has been a key partner in the planning of the project, and has put out an appeal for volunteers to come forward to help services expand. "We can offer full training to people who wish to become advisers in the service", said Gill. "It is not only interesting and varied work which can be done flexibly to suit individual volunteers, but the work will give excellent experience for people who wish to improve their own job prospects".

CEPL12 also needs volunteers, particularly to

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Citizens Advice to Re-open...

At Belle Vue Rd in September following refurbishment



help local people who lack confidence and opportunity to use online services or computers generally - this need became very apparent at the start of the Covid crisis. She said: "This is an urgent situation.

If you think you have the knowledge to help people learn, please come forward now".

Interested people are asked to contact CEPL12 at 4 Fore Street (tel 01752 848648, hub@cepl12.co.uk) or to go to the CAC website www.citizensadvicecornwall.org.uk and click on Volunteer with Us



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Saltash's Oldest Resident Celebrates Her 104th Birthday



Born during World War I to a father who died in action when she was aged 18 months, orphaned at age 10 and subsequently living on a farm at Forder and for seventy years at Lower Burraton, Thelma Bishop, now aged 104 still seems to remember every detail of her long life.

Now, probably the oldest resident in Saltash if not Cornwall she is living happily in the Abbeyfield home where Mayor Peter Samuels, as one of his first official mayoral functions was one of many guests at her 104th Birthday.

Thelma Wyatt was born in Peverell, Plymouth in 1916.

Her war widow mother died when Thelma was aged 10 and she went to live with family over a butcher's shop in Modbury. After boarding at Gunnernside School, Plymouth, she wished to be with her half sister and aged 15 went to live at Castle View Farm, Forder. She worked as waitress in Spooners' department store Plymouth before marrying Reg Bishop who was then working in a local quarry by day and playing drums in a dance band at night. Reg subsequently joined the army, landing on Sword beach post D-Day. He died thirty years ago and Thelma continued living in

Kimberley Cottages Burraton, her home for seventy years before moving to Abbeyfield eleven years ago. Her birthday fell the day before VJ Day and she and her son John remembered watching the bonfire lit in Longstone Park to mark VJ Day seventy-five ago. She also has a daughter Pam living in Wales and numerous grand, great grand and great great grandchildren. Thelma, who has seen many changes in the town since moving here in the 1930's, told us that she has always loved the town. Living to such an age she ascribes to 'hard work and no money'.

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Thelma, who has seen many changes in the town since moving here in the 1930's, told us that she has always loved the town. Living to such an age she ascribes to 'hard work and no money'.

Imagine seeing our streets transformed in to a magical outdoor art gallery in the first weekend of December.

For years, the Saltash Chamber of Commerce has organised the much-loved Christmas Festival on the first Saturday of December, but with mass gatherings out of the question due to Covid, the volunteer organisers have come up with something different, inclusive and fun that will still bring the community together, but in a Covid-safe way. They have teamed up with an award-winning project that started in Bristol in 2015, and are inviting all residents and businesses to make displays in their windows using materials like tissue paper and techniques like silhouettes. The windows will then form an enchanting trail that can be explored by the whole community.

Hilary Frank, one of the volunteer organisers at the Chamber of Commerce, says: "I started up the Lantern Parade many years ago, and love how it has grown to take a place at the heart of the Christmas festivities in Saltash. We had grand plans for this year's 10th anniversary, so I was bitterly disappointed that Covid-19 put a stop to mass gatherings. But I'm really excited about the Window Wanderland



project, especially as it will build on the wonderful community spirit that developed here over lockdown when so many families showed support for the NHS and key workers by putting rainbow displays in their windows."

Taking part is free, both as a Windowmaker and a Wanderer. And adding your window display to the trail is simple: just click on Saltash Window Wanderland under 'Upcoming Events' at www.windowwanderland.co.uk. After registration, your address will be shown on a map that Wanderers will be able to view on their smartphones or print out.

What goes in to the window displays is totally up to you:

from a chorus of cheeky robins to a full Nativity scene, from simple to spectacular - as long as it's family friendly, anything goes.

And thanks to generous sponsorship from Saltash Scrapstore, local artist Jill Hudson will be creating some

'How to...' videos that will be available on the Saltash Christmas Festival Facebook page for inspiration.

The Chamber is hoping that many residents and businesses will sign up as Windowmakers and really light up Saltash.



Remembered on VJ Day



Photo by Ian Robinson

The ten men with Saltash connections who lost their lives in the Far East conflict during World War II were remembered at a service by the War Memorial and in the Peace Garden opposite. The town had planned to mark the 75th Anniversary of the ending of the war with major celebrations including a picnic tea along Fore Street and a concert of period music. Plans were sadly abandoned due to social distancing regulations.

Instead, on the anniversary of VJ Day, which marked the end of the worldwide conflict, a short but poignant open-air service was conducted with those attending distanced through Alexandra Square.

After the roll of honour of the ten names had been read out, Prebendary Brian Anderson said prayers. The last post was followed by two minutes silence. Wreaths were laid, the first by Mayor and Mayoress Peter and Brenda Samuels. They then continued to pay the same tribute to all of those who fell so far from home including those ten from Saltash at the St. Stephens memorial.

Remembrance Day and Christmas Gatherings Remain Uncertain

A challenge currently facing the town in the age of Covid is the annual remembrance service traditionally attended by local youth organisations as well as many citizens of all ages. This is held on a Sunday close to November 11th and followed by a march to the war memorial and the laying of wreaths.

With uncertainty over the future of social distancing the town council has put forward plans for a conventional remembrance Sunday event and has reserved the Wesley Church. However, all is ready and prepared to scale back the event if necessary. One suggestion is to hold the service but with a limited attendance and to relay it to outside where others can listen while socially distanced.

Christmas plans are also uncertain. Saltash is renowned for its pre-Christmas event when crowds gather to welcome in the festive season. Here too it is uncertain what will be possible but one thing is sure, the festive lights, which add so much to the seasonal spirit of the town, will be switched on as usual.

Saltash Centenarian Lays VJ Day Wreath

A Saltash centenarian played a prominent part in Plymouth's VJ Day Anniversary commemorations.

Jim O'Connor now living at Greenwich Place, a residential home for former Royal Navy servicemen, is now the last surviving member of the Burma Star Veteran's' Plymouth group. He joined the Royal Navy aged 16 and on the outbreak of war was posted to serve on minesweeper HMS Bramble. Instead he was hospitalised through illness, an illness that saved his life since the ship was sunk with all hands.

Jim served during the siege of Malta against the German and Italian fleets and came under fire during the invasion of Sicily. He subsequently sailed to the Far East for the final two years of fighting against the Imperial Japanese Navy.

He was invited to remember former comrades as he laid the wreath on the Hoe, seventy-five years after the war came to an end, and to recite the poignant Kohima epitaph.

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