

SDC Chairman's Report 2017/2018

My year has inducted everything from the very regal Queen's garden party, to the dusty Motocross track of Sidcup and District Motor Cycle Club at Canada Heights and anything in between, including meeting HRH Princess Anne at CAB Swanley.

I have met so many wonderful people along the way, especially all the volunteers at Mencap, West Kent Mind, Kent Friendz and Beams at Hextable to name but a few. Our district is blessed with so many people doing so many good deeds for so many organisations. One lady I met told me she "gets far more out of volunteering than she feels she puts in". If everyone gave a little of their time many more of our local charities within the district could flourish.

Taking part in the Guide Dog for the Blind walk has made me realise just how fortunate I am and will no longer take my sight for granted. I do believe this is an exercise that should be undertaken by all those that choose to park vehicles on pavements.

Starting the Every Step Counts scheme, the brain child of Anna Firth, at Otford and West Kingsdown was a fulfilling sight to see. It has helped people leave their homes and go into the community to gain confidence and new friends.

How lucky is our district to see the Stag Theatre thriving, especially with the Youth Theatre Group, whose many performances I have attended. Yet again another organisation blessed with great volunteers. Other performances that need to be mentioned are St Michael's prep at Otford and Knole Academy.

As Ellenor Hospice is close to so many hearts it has been great to combine some fun filled events with raising funds for them. Who would have thought 20 councillors would have got behind the Dragon Boat race with such commitment. My end of term dinner at Brands Hatch Place along with the quiz night and indoor bowls experience at Hollybush means over £3500 was raised for Ellenor which is so heart-warming knowing all the support I received meant this could be possible.

While carrying out my duties as Chairman I have been given some lovely compliments about how I have grown into my role with such commitment. It is very important for me to acknowledge everyone in Democratic services and all the Senior Management team. Without all their hard work and support over the last year my term wouldn't have been so easy flowing. It is due to all their efficient and effective help with organising my diary that I have been able to commit to my duties as Armed Forces Champion while carrying out my engagements as Chairman.

I feel that in this last year my life has been enriched by the people I have met. Being part of the "Chain Gang" has meant I have come across some great characters some of whom will become long term friends. So now I am officially part of the "Rusty Chain Gang".

It is now time for me to handover this wonderful and fulfilling role to Cll Pat Bosley. I hope that she gets as much support from her Vice Chairman that she has given me. We have had some fun along the way.

I feel honoured that my term as Chairman can end as it starting with my being invited to start the event at Knole Park for Run, Walk and Push for Dementia, how gratifying it has been to hand out all the medals to those taking part. Both runs have raised money to support and develop local dementia services for people affected by dementia. I am grateful to Elaine Ferris from the Good Care Group and Symone Salwan from Home Instead for their assistance with the 2017 run and for taking over arrangements for the 2018 run.

I do have to say a big big thank you to my consort and chauffeur Nicki, my wonderful daughter who has rushed me around to get me where I need to be after a hard day at the office.

Larry Abraham May 2018