**Mayor’s Report to Full Council 3 February 2020**

The most important event in this period was Remembrance Sunday. It is always a poignant event attended by many hundreds of our community. Thank you all for representing our town. On the 11th November I travelled to USAF Welford to take part in their ceremony and lay a wreath on behalf of Newbury.

This report covers the very busy Christmas season. There were many enjoyable carol concerts, various charities tea and lunch parties with accompanying entertainments. From tea at church halls to the grand gallery at Englefield House. Everyone was great fun with its unique client group. I started the charity Santa Fun Run and packed parcels for the over 80s at Sainsbury, collected food donations at Tesco for their parcel distribution. We hosted a reception at the Town Hall following the Christmas Light Switch on. This was a successful event and I hope it will be repeated. I asked Newbury College students to design the Mayors Christmas Card. The Deputy Leader and Civic Manager joined me to select the winning design. I hope you all valued receiving your card. Christmas Day itself commenced with a visit to our community hospital. I did a very good double act with Mike Cole Mayor of Thatcham. We visited all patients with Santa following on distributing gifts. I then went to St Georges to spend some time at the community day of entertainment and lunch for those that would otherwise be home alone. This event has been running for many years and is another example of the great community spirit of Newbury.

There have been several visits to schools, looking at exhibitions, presenting prizes and watching productions. I was particularly impressed with the launch of the Park House Computing Centre. They are working in partnership with business and providing training for our local primary schools.

You may recall that in my last reported I explained that my Chaplin had been redeployed to Alderney. I then appointed Fr Peter Codd to the position. However, the Bishop struck again Fr Codd has been asked to cover a Southampton Parish until March. I have decided to cope as best I can not try for number three.

The above are just a few of the events attended. Given the volume of requests the Deputy Mayor, Cllr. Billy Drummond, was also kept very busy. My thanks to him.

#### Over time some of our council traditions have faded. The Civic Manager and I have set about researching and reviewing them.

#### The tradition of appointing a Mayor’s Cadet was revived by the last Mayor and I have continued the tradition. Currently the cadet is provided by 211 Squadron Royal Airforce. The Mayor’s Cup (property of the squadron) is presented at their Awards Ceremony to a cadet judged to have shown great commitment. The Lord Lieutenant presents the award with the Mayor presenting the cup and handing the Newbury Shield arm badge to the successful cadet. The Squadron support and assist at Mayor Making and Remembrance Sunday. All of this should continue. We are also considering the Mayor appointing a cadet from the other services. A paper will be presented to Civic Pride, Arts and Leisure in due course. Currently the council has no set policy.

####  I am delighted to report that the Civic Manager has re-established a link with Christ’s Hospital School and the Wests Gift.

*John and Frances West lived in the latter part of the 17th and early part of the 18th centuries. John West became a wealthy merchant in the City of London and lived in a house on the site that is now occupied by the Mansion House. John and Frances had no children of their own and the ‘Standard Pedigree’, maintained by Christ’s Hospital, records the name of descendants of their relations. This charity established under the wills of the Wests’, provides income for the benefit of children resident in the boroughs of Reading, Newbury and Twickenham, together with one girl from the City of London. The link to Newbury is that John* *married Frances Seakes from Reading, the granddaughter of the Mayor of Newbury, Gabriel Cox in 1627 and 1635.*

####

#### I am working with the Civic Manager to arrange a small councillor’s group visit to the school later this month. Following this visit, we are hopeful that future visits may be able to take place, giving future Mayors the opportunity to visit the school.

#### The aims are to meet the current West Scholars, invite them to the Annual Carol Service and see the work of the school. I would like the Council to promote these opportunities for Newbury students and following the visit to the School a proposal will be taken to the Civic Pride, Arts and Leisure Committee.

#### Councillor Elizabeth O’Keeffe

#### Mayor of Newbury

#### 25 January 2020