

Mayor's Report – January 2025

January kicked off in Bradninch as it always does – with a uniquely joyful celebration where we bid farewell to the old year and welcome the new. The turnout was excellent for the 2025 12th Night celebrations, especially considering it fell this year on the first day back to school for Duchy students and others. The lantern theme “Elements” showcased some incredible creativity. My personal favourites, other than the water and fire giants, were the Apollo 11 spacecraft and the team of girls with their lantern skirts (to declare an interest, that team did include my two daughters!). It seemed there were more trees than ever before, both dragged up in the traditional way, and collected the day before. Like most Bradninch events, 12th Night is made possible by a dedicated team of volunteers, and big thanks need to go to Mary Richards for leading the event, Ross Lawson and his team for taking charge of the bonfire, Molly Southwood and her stewards for facilitating the road closure, Jon “Baloo” Williams and the Scouts for their never waning enthusiasm and willingness to get involved, the Millers Morris for the entertainment, and everyone else who volunteered, participated or generally showed willing! I oversaw the lantern workshops this year but will be standing down from this role after 4 years. So if anyone is keen to take up this mantle, please let Mary Richards know!

As we move deeper into winter, there are clear signs of an upcoming spring starting to emerge – even some daffodils starting to peek their way out of the ground. The snow all across the UK last week has served as a reminder of the challenges that the weather can present. We luckily escaped the worst of it in Bradninch, but please do remember to remain prepared and check on your neighbours in the event of any power losses, water outages, road closures, etc. I am thinking especially towards the potential for flooding as the spring rain approaches.

Looking forward to more positive events, the music festival and town fair have both confirmed their dates for 2025. Again, these are volunteer run events, so do get involved if you can! On a smaller scale, the Mayor's Coffee morning in support of my charity this year, The 1st Bradninch Scouts, will take place at the Guildhall on Saturday 8 February. And expect to read more, but my Mayor's Quiz, again in support of Scouts, will be at the Kensham Club on the evening of 3 May. Please come along to both events and lend your support to an organisation that we as a town owe so much gratitude to!

Finally, I would like to finish this month's report with a tribute. Several councillors, including myself, bid a sad farewell to former Mayor Rick Andrews last Friday. Rick was a member of Bradninch Town Council for a decade, serving as Mayor twice. His contribution to our community were so much more than that, though. Rick and his wife Vicki moved to Hele in 2007, following both of their decorated careers in the Army. Rick was a familiar sight in town – never a hair out of place or a button unpolished. He was distinguished, but never unapproachable. He was the Mayor when I joined the Council nearly 8 years ago, and I will always be grateful for his warm welcome and willingness to impart his knowledge. Rick leaves behind Vicki, their two children, and their grandchildren. I know the thoughts of everyone who knew Rick are with them at this difficult time.

Cllr Emily Ottery

Mayor, Bradninch Town Council.