

# PRESS RELEASE

## The 2017 Civic Celebration



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This year's Civic Celebration, held at the Murray Hall on Sunday 26 February, was organised by the current town mayor, Cllr Carol Davies.

The music and readings were specially chosen to reflect the theme of this year's celebration: "One person can make a difference and everyone should try", a text attributed to John F Kennedy.

Music during the celebration included the popular anthem "You're the Voice" sung by the St John Fisher Catholic Primary School choir led by Kathryn Poulter; a humorous rendition of the "Carnival of Venice" by local musicians, Ken and Rachel Bartels (flute and harp); Matthew Shepherd, vocalist and guitarist, performed two of his own songs and Muki Zubis sung Diamonds.

Readings were given by Epping Forest Youth Councillors, Alex Hantig and Alex Theodorou, and Nicole Abraham, daughter of deputy town mayor, Philip Abraham.

We are particularly grateful to Ian King, Leader at Restore Community Church, for acting as compere for the afternoon.

One of the highlights of this annual event is the presentation of the Citizenship Awards, an opportunity to celebrate Loughton's wonderful community spirit and some of the people that make a difference in our town. This award scheme is now in its 9<sup>th</sup> year and we are delighted that there are still plenty of worthy nominations from amongst our residents.

We were honoured to have Michael Chapman, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex, in attendance to make the formal presentations.

Our congratulations go to **Sue Taylor**, the winner of the 2017 citizenship award. Sue has been the director of the Loughton Festival for over 10 years. The festival showcases the

people and organisations that make Loughton such a vibrant place to live. It provides a range of events for all the family, from walks, talks and music to community events. This year's festival in May will also raise valuable funds for the Essex Air Ambulance and the Loughton Youth Project.

In nominating Sue for this award, Kay Lundy described Sue as being passionate about Loughton and its inhabitants. Sue is also a keen member and promoter of the Epping Forest Neighbourhood Watch and runs the Debden History page. Sue received an engraved silver rose bowl and scroll and a cheque for £250 will be sent on her behalf to the Loughton Youth Project.

A special community long service award was presented to **Margaret Weston** for her dedication to the health and wellbeing of local residents. Margaret taught yoga over many decades, specialising in those with other serious health problems. She received a framed certificate and a cheque for £250 will be sent to Cancer UK on her behalf.

The final award was made to the **16<sup>th</sup> Epping Forest Beavers** for their artistic challenge to the Local Plan proposals. These young residents expressed their love and appreciation for the local green spaces and their objections to the proposed development through a series of before and after drawings. The Beavers also received a framed certificate and £250 cheque for their group.

The refreshments after the celebrations sponsored by the Loughton, Chigwell & Buckhurst Hill Rotary Club and Pesh & Manisha Kapasiawala, were provided by local bakery school, Fabulicious.

A retiring collection raised funds for the Town Mayor's charities, the Loughton branch of the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Loughton Food Bank.

Date: 28 February 2017