

**MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Good evening everyone and welcome.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a happy 2013.

Twenty twelve was an incredible year for the borough, with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Olympics, and a visit by the Queen.

It was a very busy time with many challenges, but we continued to deliver our services with little or no disruption and helped make it a memorable year for our residents.

So a big thank you to everyone involved. I look forward to 2013 and another successful year for Havering.

It was busy time for my Consort David and me during Christmas and the New Year. We visited patients at the Queen's Hospital where we heard glowing reports about the nursing staff.

We also went to the Salvation Army and chatted to 50 local residents enjoying a Christmas lunch and learnt of the sterling work the Salvation Army do for the homeless.

I welcomed 2013 in with members of the community players from the Havering Theatre Trust at the London's New Year's Day Parade. It was a terrific day for everyone and we won a prize. So well done to all those involved in giving up their time to take part in the Parade.

I would now like to welcome Joy Hollister, our new Group Director for Social Care & Learning to Havering. Joy joins us from the Corporation of London.

I recently visited 100 Avelon Road, our day centre, which cares for people with disabilities. The clients are delighted with the refurbished building and the facilities available. It really is state of the art. I would urge Members to go and see it.

I believe a fantastic garden is being created there thanks to Cllr Pam Light and some of our Havering in Bloom Allotment winners.

I was delighted to hear that the Heritage Lottery Fund has provided funding to support two projects in the borough. One of these projects is the restoration of Upminster Windmill, which has received development funding.

The HLF also provided funding to go towards a project which aims to digitise historic exhibits, making them available online and more accessible to the public. This project, called "Romford: the birth and death of a Victorian town" is based in the Local Studies & Family History Centre in Romford Central Library.

Last Sunday I attended the Holocaust Memorial day service, along with more than 100 people in Coronation Gardens, Romford. This year, it had a national theme: Communities Together - Build a Bridge.

During the coming months I will be hosting visits from pupils of 20 primary schools to give them an insight into the workings of the Mayoralty and the Town Hall.

As we prepare for the setting of this year's Council tax, may I remind you that that the consultation on our budget proposals for 2013/14 is now online for our residents to have their say. This closes on Monday 4 February.

And finally, I would like to thank our Council staff, who worked hard during the recent cold snap, some through the night, to ensure our essential services were delivered and our roads were safe. They did a tremendous job.