

MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Good evening everyone and welcome to the Full Council meeting.

What a glorious summer it has been! The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were truly spectacular. Havering had the privilege of hosting the Olympic Torch, which passed through Romford, Hornchurch and Rainham at the end of July.

A total of 150,000 people packed into our town centres and lined the Torch Route to cheer on the official Torchbearers, and together they made this a day to remember.

I was lucky enough to see the Torch in both Hornchurch and Rainham, and can tell you it was a wonderful precursor to the Games. I am so proud of all our Havering Ambassadors and volunteers who helped out on the day.

There were the astonishing Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Britain's record haul of medals in both Games, and the truly awe-inspiring achievements of all our athletes and competitors. I was cheering on Mo, Jessica, Ellie, Bradley and all the rest.

And who could forget Havering's own Amy Marren? She's only 14 and was making her debut at the Paralympics; she did really well in her swimming races. We're so proud of her and all of TeamGB!

I'm delighted to announce we are giving a ~Mayor's Award this evening to our very own Olympic champion, Mark Hunter, who is from this borough.

Mark amazed us by scooping the silver medal, with his rowing partner Zac Purchase, in the lightweight men's double scull race. We awarded Mark the Freedom of the Borough of Havering four years ago after he won the gold medal in Beijing. And I'm happy to present him with the Mayor's Award tonight.

At this point, Mark Hunter came forward, to a standing ovation, to receive the Mayor's Award.

Back to this summer: even though our Hornchurch Live music festival had to be sadly called-off because of bad storms, the skies did clear the following two days to enable us to hold yet another brilliant Havering Show. We know our residents love this annual show, which was free to attend once again. Thousands of families enjoyed a wide range of activities and splendid entertainment, from jousting knights and amazing stunts to music from the rock legend Suzi Quatro.

And last Saturday, we enjoyed another well-attended - and free - event in the borough. Pedalling into the Past was held in Hornchurch Country Park, and successfully mixed local history with cycling and fun for all the family. We even had a Lancaster Bomber fly over!

Now it's time for a quick look at what's coming up for the borough this autumn.

We will find out the winners of the Havering Business Awards in October, and there's a Havering Asks Q&A panel event in November.

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And I'm delighted that The Royal Anglian Regiment will be marching through Romford on November 6 - time to be announced - to celebrate having the Freedom of the Borough. That's something we can all look forward to seeing.

Finally, a hat-trick of good news stories!

Last week, our Banking Protocol scheme won the best Public/Private Partnership award at the Association for Public Service Excellence Awards. Our Banking Protocol sees us working with local banks and partner agencies to keep vulnerable people safe from doorstep conmen. Well done to our staff in Trading Standards, Community Safety, Communications, and our partner agencies, who were all involved in the project.

During a visit to Havering by our twinned town of Ludwigshafen, the Leader was presented with a City of Ludwigshafen gold partnership medal in recognition of his long term commitment to the strong bond between them and us.

The Council has been presented with an award by the Ministry of Defence for the support we give our staff who are volunteer members of the armed forces reserves.

Finally, yesterday, I attended the London in Bloom Awards. I am most proud to say we were awarded 3 Golds, one each for Bedfords Park, Hornchurch Country Park and Bio Diversity across the Borough. In addition we were awarded 3 Silver Gilt. Bearing in mind the budget we have when compared to the likes of the City of London, these achievements are simply magnificent and those whose work led to them are to be highly commended.