

Civic Pride column – December 2021

By Hester Hand, Friends of Abingdon Civic Society

It was great to see such a good turnout at last month's Remembrance ceremonies. Abingdon people always support civic events, whether formal such as those, or pleasurable such as Bun-throwing, Fun-in-the-Park etc.

How important these are to us was shown recently by the widespread disappointment when it became clear that there would not be a Christmas Extravaganza this year. Many people said that it always marks the start of the Christmas period for them and their families.

What came as a surprise to a lot of them was to find out that the Extravaganza, like many other events in the town's annual calendar, is not organised by the Council, but by volunteers. In the case of the Extravaganza those volunteers have in recent years come from the Chamber of Commerce i.e local independent business owners who had to find time to do it while still managing all the other challenges of running a business. Given the extent of those challenges at present, it is maybe not surprising that they could not find enough of their members with time to organise an event on this scale.

Other major town events that are run by groups of volunteers include the Abingdon Airshow, the Cycling Festival, Food Festival, ATOM Festival and Heritage Open Days – plus many other smaller events. All of these are very popular, but they involve a lot of work, not just on the day, but during many months beforehand. It would be wonderful if some of those who enjoy the events could offer even a small amount of their time to help keep them going in future years. Contact details for the groups organising the events can be found on the Town Council website at <https://www.abingdon.gov.uk/community-services/clubs-societies>

All being well, many of our favourite civic events will be back to normal next year and there will also be some very special events in early June to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Town Council will be co-ordinating a programme of events in Rye Farm Meadows from Monday 30th May – Sunday 5th June (and of course Bun-throwing in the Market Place) and community groups are being invited to contribute to the programme. So that will be a great opportunity for us to come together not only to enjoy the events but also to help make them happen.

Back to the present though, there are plenty of activities around the town to help us enjoy the run-up to Christmas – concerts, markets, craft fairs, films and church events – and even without an Extravaganza we can still support our local shops and enjoy their displays and the Christmas lights.