

My chosen charities this year are the Believe and Achieve Trust; LGBT Foundation; Millstream Animal Shelter; Tameside 4 Good and Tameside, Oldham and Glossop MIND. Each of these organisations holds a special place in my heart and I am pleased to be able to work in partnership with them.

In addition to this I have been more than happy to lend my support to other good causes including the scanner appeal at Tameside Hospital.

As your mayoral team, Joe, my consort Cory and I have tried to be good ambassadors for the council and for the whole of the borough. We intend to continue to work hard right up until the point when my term of office ends in May.

Finally, I would like to thank all members and officers of the council for their unwavering friendship, guidance and support. I truly value it.

Thank you once again.

With every good wish,

Cllr Leigh Drennan
Civic Mayor of Tameside



Annual Report

by The Civic Mayor of Tameside Councillor Leigh Drennan



AS I enter the final lap of my year of office, I would like to share some of the many highlights with you.

I was installed as civic mayor at the full meeting of Tameside Council on 21 May, 2019, and immediately got to perform the first of many very enjoyable duties. It was a great pleasure to take part in the ceremony to confer the title of honorary alderman on John Bell, who was first elected as a member for Hyde Werneth ward in 1975, right back in the authority's earliest days.

When I took the chain of office I made it clear that I wanted "inclusivity" to be the watchword of my time as mayor. I was keenly aware not only of the great honour of serving as civic mayor of Tameside, but also my place in the borough's history as its youngest mayor, and its first openly gay mayor. I wanted to use both landmarks as a force for progress. I believe I have done that.

Consequently I have visited as many schools as possible. I want young people to understand that they should never be discouraged by the challenges they will inevitably face in life. I have stressed that we all have it in us to succeed. No one should ever consider themselves written off.

I was especially proud to go back to my own school, St Damian's RC Science College in Ashton, where I was delighted to thank the teachers who believed in me and set me on the road to university, membership of Tameside Council, and the mayoralty.

My visits have taken in further education, high schools, special schools and primary schools. One of the most enjoyable aspects was to take the borough mace to Ravensfield School, Dukinfield, and Bradley Green in Hyde, to see children become mini-mayor for a day. Their enjoyment was priceless and it proved quite a task to get them to hand back the robes.

In July, it was a great pleasure to join council colleagues at the Tameside Pride festival in Stalybridge. We had so much fun at the family day in Cheetham's Park, and then at the evening event at the New Labour Club.

I have also spoken to various LGBT+ groups to listen to members' life stories and share my own experiences.

More recently I was honoured to play my part in conferring the freedom of the borough on Dr Ron Hill MBE. Ron is a man who has brought a vast amount of prestige to Tameside, not only as a world-famous runner, but as a highly successful entrepreneur and innovator.

It has also been a privilege to work closely with the Indian and Asian communities. I am a great admirer of their culture – and cuisine – and believe they have made

a huge contribution to our area. It was a huge pleasure to attend events such as independence celebrations and to support the Shree Ram Mandir in Ashton. I enjoyed meeting the Assistant High Commissioner for Bangladesh, Abu Nasar Md. Anowarul Islam, when he visited Dukinfield Town Hall in September.

History has always been one of my passions, so I was keen to play my part in the events marking the 200th anniversary of Peterloo in August. This, in turn, led me to attend as many open days as possible during Heritage Month in September.

I was also fascinated to meet Thomas Duckenfield III, a lawyer from Washington DC who is descended from the famous Roundhead Colonel Robert Duckenfield whose statue stands outside Dukinfield Town Hall.

Culture and sport are at the heart of life in Tameside, so both have figured prominently in my schedule. I had a great time attending the Whit walks and Whit Friday band contests but the highlight was in August, when the world-famous Royal Exchange came to Stalybridge and the civic hall was briefly home to their pop-up theatre, The Den.

Stalybridge was also the scene for the lantern parade that launched last year's Christmas celebrations. I was delighted to go there as well as to individual town events.

In terms of sport, I've been to rugby league in Stalybridge, watched the Tour of Tameside and the Tour of Britain, and even done my own little bit by taking part in a sponsored abseil in support of Tameside and Glossop MIND at Harrop Edge. I've also toured the new Tameside Wellness Centre in Denton.

One of the biggest benefits of being civic mayor is the people you meet. I've tried to entertain as many groups as possible in the parlour, but it was amazing to talk to our centenarians. I was able to celebrate the 100th birthdays of May Martin, Kathleen Meeks and Catherine Reed, as well as Mary Hargreaves who was 105. They were four incredible ladies and it was an honour to meet them and hear their stories.

In November I was proud to lay a wreath on behalf of the borough at Ashton War Memorial. As a student of history I am very much aware of the sacrifices made by the people of Tameside in the two world wars and other conflicts such as the Gulf and Afghanistan.

As you will know, a major part of the Civic Mayor's remit is to raise money for the annual charity appeal. This has been a genuine pleasure and I'm delighted to report that things have been very productive so far.

