

## Chairman's Report

7<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Sometimes writing a weekly column can be difficult. I may have just taken over this one but often write the run report for parkrun. However, writing this week with the 75th anniversary of VE day, copy will be easy to produce.

The guns fell silent on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 and Europe celebrated the end of fighting. On Friday we pay our respects to the men and women who fought and died in the war. My family were lucky we didn't lose anyone. Two of my Great uncles were captured by the Japanese but came home; one Grandad wasn't fit and the other served in the Navy before the war and was on fire-watch in Bristol. Shepton Mallet Cenotaph though, contains the names of many local men who didn't come home and they gave their lives so that the world would be a better place and not ruled by tyranny.

It's worth remembering the hardship of their families left at home, not knowing if and when they would see their loved ones again, and struggling to survive with rationing. Put into context the hardship of the current climate as the world deals with the Covid-19 pandemic, pales in its significance in relation to the hardship of life in 1940's Europe.

On Friday, please celebrate VE day, fly your bunting and union flags and party, but please remember the social distancing rules we are living by currently. The Union Flag will fly proudly at the Cenotaph and The Royal British Legion will lead the way with celebrations.

Whilst discussing The Royal British Legion, two of its members are on the front line in a different guise to their service days, as the Chair Andy Ransom and Town Councillor Nick Tolson are paramedics based at Shepton Mallet ambulance station. This leads me nicely to the piece below written by Nick as it's his turn this week to tell you a bit about the projects he is involved in around the town.

"One of the strengths of the current Town Council is the fact that councillors come from a wide variety of jobs and life experiences. We may not agree on everything but ultimately we have the community of Shepton Mallet at heart and want the best for the town.

I'm a paramedic in Shepton and pleased to bring that experience to the council and been able to apply it to the current Covid-19 crisis. As Vice-Chair of the Shepton Mallet Coronavirus Volunteers I have been supporting and advising on the medical aspects of delivering shopping and ensuring our volunteers stay safe. It's been really inspiring how the community has come together to help each other.

In relation to my work and with more people exercising on bikes, I have been particularly concerned about cyclists not wearing helmets. Even a simple crash can be serious (as our Chairman recently found out) so please just wear a helmet and avoid a life changing head injury.

As a former RAF Police Officer, I appreciate all that the services do for our country. I don't think many people realise the amount of work that goes on behind the scenes to ensure the UK is safe. With the 75th Anniversary of VE Day this month, it's a great

pity that we can't hold our remembrance service together this year but we will still not forget all who were part of WW2. There are not many left now, but we thank them for their service. We are very lucky that the British Legion in Shepton has so many members who work hard to ensure ex-servicemen and women are looked after when they need assistance.

Finally, I am proud to be the chairman of Radio Shepton. Recently we have become an 'on demand' service which means that you can download and listen to many podcasts and shows from our Facebook site. We hope to be fully involved with the recovery in Shepton Mallet following this horrible virus."

**Edric Hobbs, Chair, Shepton Mallet Town Council**