

**A Christmas Message from the Mayor**

Dear fellow residents

On behalf of Peacehaven Town Council, I would like to send you a message of hope and gratitude as we prepare to celebrate Christmas and start a new year.

In many ways, I would say that 2020 was a year like none before.

Like a thief coming in the night to steal your precious belongings, we experienced in our community the challenges of Covid19.

Within a couple of weeks, this uninvited guest has completely changed the way we live, work and socialise. Sadly, many of us have lost a close relative, a friend or their income. Some have been obliged to self-isolate, to cancel family events or to start working from home.

It has been hard, and I share your pain. As Christmas approaches, we have come to realise that many families can’t afford gifts for their children, or enough food to feed them.

But in the middle of this storm, I have witnessed the extraordinary resilience of our community. We have responded to COVID19 with love, kindness and solidarity.

With generosity, you have donated to our Food Bank and Christmas present appeals. With the support of the Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) and the Lions Club, we have been able to ensure that each child in need receives a Christmas present this year; I also pay tribute to the volunteers who have given up their time and the other local organisations who have provided gifts, meals and hampers too.

This morning the Foodbank Coordinator shared with us that she had a phone call with one of the clients, who has five children and was really struggling. The foodbank offered to deliver Christmas presents for all the children and the client was so overwhelmed that she burst into tears.

“*I cannot be more grateful for all the effort the community has put to support me in my time of need*”, the mum of five said.

Today, I would like to pass on my special thanks to all involved in the COVID-19 response in Peacehaven. You have been fantastic, and we will always remember the extra mile you did, offering your time, resources, skills and knowhow to help others.

As we approach the new year, I am confident that love and kindness will always prevail over darkness and any other challenge we may face.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2021

Claude Cheta

Mayor of Peacehaven