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PRESS RELEASE

THREE VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED WITH AWARD

At a meeting of Leighton-Linslade Town Council held on 25 January 2021, it was agreed to award the 2021 Community Volunteer Awards to three very deserving recipients: Katrina Boyce, Rosemarie (Rose) Gunter and Stuart Clarke.

All three award recipients were nominated by a fellow resident for having undertaken more than five years of voluntary service to the benefit of the town.

The awards would ordinarily be presented at the annual Civic Service but due to the Covid-19 lockdown and subsequent restrictions, the actual presentations were only able to take place on Friday, 11 June at the White House. Three brief, separate presentations took place with Town Mayor Councillor Farzana Kharawala giving the 2021 recipients a personalised award. All three recipients also have their name on display on the awards board in the Council Chamber.

Katrina Boyce was instrumental in establishing the charity 'The Leighton Buzzard Centre for Health, Healing and Counselling' just over thirty years ago and has played a pivotal role throughout this time, touching many lives with her caring and listening skills. The Centre celebrated its thirtieth anniversary in late 2020 and offers a weekly session in which people can access help and support, with volunteer therapists, trustees and local clergy offering a range of activities and therapies. The Centre, inspired by Katrina, has helped hundreds of people since its inception.

Rosemarie (known as Rose) Gunter was nominated for her myriad roles in supporting the local community. A volunteer helper and governor for several years at Heathwood Lower School, she also has a keen interest in healthcare, being involved in the Local Pharmacy Committee and a member of the Bassett Road Surgery Patient Participation Group since 2011. Rose helped set up the Walking for Health initiative as well as the "yellow book" of information for the elderly. Rose is Membership Secretary of the

Leighton Buzzard Youth Theatre and also helps to make costumes for their performances.

Stuart Clarke, a former member of the ambulance service, was nominated for his 20+ years of service as an active volunteer with the St John Ambulance organisation. In addition to his first aid duties, Stuart visited numerous schools and groups to deliver first aid training and is well known in the local community. Following his retirement, Stuart also took on a role volunteering with the local Naval Cadets, teaching first aid.

In 2020 Stuart answered the call for former NHS staff to return to help during the Covid-19 pandemic and has been working with colleagues in the emergency services for several months.

The Council is now welcoming nominations for the 2022 awards. The closing date for nominations is 31 October 2021 and full details can be found on the Town Council's website.

END

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