



The White House, Hockliffe Street, Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire LU7 1HD
T: 01525 63192 F: 01525 853073
E: info@leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk W: www.leightonlinslade-tc.gov.uk

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.

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 Chair of 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.

Town Mayor Councillor Farzana Kharawala said “We are so fortunate in Leighton Buzzard and Linslade to have wonderful community spirit, embodied by these three deserving award recipients. They have done a huge amount to help others and it is right that they should be recognised. It will be an honour to present our very first Community Volunteer Awards to them, when I am safely able to do so”.

Under normal circumstances, the 2021 awards would have been presented at the annual Civic Service. With the current lockdown restrictions, this year’s service will be held remotely on 28 February and can be viewed online. The service will still include a celebration of our award recipients, but the actual award presentation will take place at a later date, when safe to do so.

The Council is aware that a huge number of people volunteer across Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, making a real difference to many people’s lives. If volunteering is something you might be interested in doing, why not visit the Town Council website or the Community Action Bedfordshire website for possible opportunities?

The Council will be welcoming nominations for the 2022 awards between June – October. Full details can be found on the Town Council’s website.

END

Author: Sarah Sandiford, Deputy Town Clerk

Word count: 551

Date: 26 January 2021