

Mayor of Cowes Report

July - August 2026

I am pleased to present a summary of civic engagements, community events and official functions attended during the latter part of July and August 2026. It has been an exceptionally busy and rewarding period, reflecting the strength of community spirit across Cowes and the Isle of Wight.

Community Events

Lanesend Primary School Summer Fair

I was delighted to attend the Lanesend Primary School Summer Fair, where the school field was full of families enjoying a wonderful afternoon in the sunshine. The event featured a wide range of stalls, face painting, local dance performances and an entertaining magic show by David Randini. One of the most popular attractions was the opportunity for children to splat teachers with wet sponges. The fair demonstrated strong community support for the school, and I would like to thank the staff, volunteers and organisers for delivering such a successful event.

Northwood Cemetery Open Day and Friends of Northwood Church Open Day

I attended the Northwood Cemetery Open Day, which celebrated local history, heritage and community involvement. The event provided residents with an opportunity to explore the Heritage Resource Centre and learn about the work undertaken by bereavement services, volunteers and heritage organisations.

The event was attended by the Deputy Mayor and the High Sheriff of the Isle of Wight and featured displays from the Cowes Heritage & Community Group, Friends of Northwood Cemetery, Ability Dogs 4 Young People, local artists and stonemasons.

I was particularly pleased to see the Friends of Northwood Cemetery receive the Green Flag Award for 2026/27, recognising the dedication of volunteers who work tirelessly to preserve this important community asset.

Harbour Safety Day – Shepards Marina

Harbour Safety Day at Shepards Marina provided an excellent opportunity to engage with organisations responsible for keeping our waters safe. The event featured safety demonstrations, emergency service vehicles, interactive exhibits and educational activities for residents and visitors.

I would like to congratulate Cowes Harbour Commission, Jennie and all involved in organising such an informative and well-attended event. It was also encouraging to see fellow councillors supporting this important initiative.

Cultural and Heritage Events

Britannia Wake Premiere – Trinity Theatre

On 25 July I attended the premiere of *Britannia Wake* at Trinity Theatre with my consort. The event attracted a large audience and included presentations from Trinity Theatre President Amanda Robertson and the film's writer Diana Kimpton.

The evening also saw the launch of the new Experience Cowes website, presented by Charles Egerton-Warburton and Jonathan Nainby-Luxmoore. The website will provide a valuable platform for promoting local events, businesses, attractions and organisations, strengthening Cowes' profile for both residents and visitors.

Cowes Week Bicentenary Celebrations

Unveiling of the Cowes Week Bicentenary Plaque

A significant highlight of the summer was welcoming Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to Cowes on 1 August to unveil the commemorative plaque marking the 200th anniversary of Cowes Week.

The ceremony, held on The Parade, recognised two centuries of sailing heritage and the profound impact Cowes Week continues to have on our town and the international sailing community. The plaque will serve as a permanent legacy of the bicentenary celebrations.

Cowes Week Community Engagement

Throughout Cowes Week I spent time meeting many of the charities, organisations and community groups participating in the celebrations. Their work showcases the tremendous support available across our community and highlights the dedication of volunteers who make Cowes such a special place.

Organisations represented included:

- Alzheimer's Café Isle of Wight
- Daisy Ring Bus
- Age UK Isle of Wight

- Vectis Housing Association
- Home-Start Isle of Wight
- Gurnard Parish Council
- Isle of Wight Youth Trust
- Isle of Wight Foodbank
- Ability Dogs 4 Young People
- Isle of Wight Street Pastors
- One Wight Health
- Creative Island
- Inclusion Isle of Wight

I am grateful to all those who contributed their time and expertise during the week and to Town Councillors who held surgeries and engaged directly with residents and visitors.

Cowes Week Cocktail Party

I attended the Cowes Week Cocktail Party, which provided an opportunity to engage with representatives from across the sailing, business and local communities during this landmark bicentenary year.

Cowes Open Bowls Tournament

I was pleased to support the Cowes Open Bowls Tournament and meet competitors and organisers who continue to promote within our community.

Reception aboard THV Patricia

Attendance at the reception aboard THV Patricia provided an opportunity to meet representatives of maritime organisations and acknowledge their contribution to the safety and success of Cowes Week.

Cowes Harbour Commission Cocktail Party

The reception hosted by Cowes Harbour Commission highlighted the essential role the organisation plays in maintaining a safe and thriving harbour environment and provided an opportunity to engage with key maritime partners.

Royal Navy Reception

Attendance at the Royal Navy Reception allowed recognition of the longstanding links between the Royal Navy, maritime heritage and the town of Cowes.

Royal Yacht Squadron Luncheon

I was honoured to attend the Royal Yacht Squadron luncheon and participate in discussions celebrating Cowes' international profile as the home of world-class sailing.

Red Funnel Fireworks Display

The Cowes Week celebrations concluded with the traditional Red Funnel fireworks display, enjoyed by residents and visitors alike and providing a fitting conclusion to the bicentenary year celebrations.

Civic Reception at Northwood House

One of the highlights of the period was hosting the Mayor's Reception at Northwood House. The evening celebrated the many individuals, charities and organisations making a positive contribution to life in Cowes.

I would like to record my sincere thanks to our sponsors:

- Adgestone Vineyard
- Red Funnel
- Wight Crystal
- Pinnacle Gin and Pinnacle Suites Hotel

I am also grateful to the entertainers who contributed to the success of the evening:

- Medina Marching Band
- Adam Art Caricatures

During the reception recognition was given to Alzheimer's Café Isle of Wight and the Daisy Ring Bus for their outstanding contributions to our community.

Visiting Tall Ship – Dar Młodzieży

It was a pleasure to welcome the Polish sail training vessel **Dar Młodzieży** to Cowes during the summer. As the flagship of the Polish Naval Training Fleet and the first Polish-built ocean-going sailing vessel to circumnavigate the globe, her visit provided a significant maritime attraction for residents and visitors alike and further enhanced Cowes' international maritime connections.

Conclusion

The past month has showcased the very best of Cowes. From school fairs and community open days to major maritime celebrations associated with the Cowes Week Bicentenary, I have been privileged to witness the remarkable dedication of volunteers, charities, businesses, community groups and partner organisations.

I would like to thank everyone who organised, supported and attended these events. Their collective efforts continue to strengthen our community, celebrate our heritage and promote Cowes as a welcoming and vibrant town.

Councillor Stuart Ellis

Mayor of Cowes

August 2026