

1st May 2020

COMMUNITY RALLIES TO CELEBRATE BOB'S BIG BIRTHDAY

The Pembrokeshire community has rallied around to give a 90 year-old RAF veteran a birthday he will never forget.

Wing Commander Robert (Bob) Jones of Pembroke Dock turned 90 yesterday, Thursday 30th April, surrounded by cards, gifts, balloons, food and drink kindly gifted by local residents and businesses.

The incredible community effort swung into action to ensure Bob wasn't alone on his birthday after his planned party had to be cancelled because of coronavirus.

Bob lives alone and has no family in Pembrokeshire, but a celebration to mark his special day had been planned at his favourite café, the Wavecrest in Angle.

Bob loved visiting the café every Friday for his lunch and it was there he struck up a friendship with owner Jade Griffiths.

Bob's family were devastated when the party had to be cancelled but contacted Jade to see if the cafe could organise for some cakes to be delivered.

But Jade decided to go a step further and things soon spiralled beyond her wildest imagination.

An appeal on the Wavecrest Facebook page for cards to mark Bob's special day was picked up by local media and Pembroke Dock County Councillor Josh Beynon.

Cllr Beynon helped reach more and more people and there was soon a flurry of activity.

As of Thursday morning Jade had amassed around 50 cards, children's posters and drawings, gifts and well wishes.

Foam in Milford Haven donated food and the Lounge, also Milford Haven, donated a bottle of wine.

Jade, from Pembroke Dock, took the presents, food and cards to Bob on the morning of his birthday.

She said: "He was completely overwhelmed, it was so emotional but so heart-warming.

He asked me to thank every single person for their kindness, he couldn't believe it."

And the celebrations culminated on Thursday evening with Pembroke Dock firefighters, an ambulance crew, Jade's family, Wavecrest staff, friends and neighbours joining Bob at this home - socially distanced of course - to mark his birthday and the weekly clap for carers.

Jade said: "He was so surprised and phoned his family to say it had been the most memorable day.

"The response has been totally overwhelming from the whole community.

"His family are so grateful for the kindness. During this time of darkness, the level of community spirit and love has been overwhelming. "I for one will not forget the generosity from the people of Pembrokeshire and beyond.

"From spending time with Bob I can tell you his generation still has so much to give.

"We can learn so much from them and their stories and I'll be forever grateful for my friendship with him.

"With Captain Tom Moore and Bob sharing a birthday I think it was perfect for community spirit."

Cllr Beynon said: "One of the things that has amazed me since this lockdown started is the sheer generosity and spirit of the people in our communities all across Pembrokeshire.

"What started out as a Facebook plea has resulted in a home cooked meal, a bottle of wine and more than 50 cards for Mr Jones' 90th birthday.

"I want to thank everyone who has responded to the request and a special thanks to Jade for organising this. One small act of kindness can mean so much to an individual.'

Bob's daughter, Helen Boniface, sent thanks to the entire community via Cllr Beynon.

Helen said her father's fondest childhood memories were those spent with his grandparents, Captain Mark & Amy Roch who lived at 99 Bush Street, Pembroke Dock.

She added: "Thank you everyone, stay safe and well and carry on taking care of one another."