

# **‘Tour of the Town’ serves up festive cheer to pub locals**

Staff from The Heathcote in Leamington Spa, accompanied by Father Christmas and Disney character Olaf, treated local residents to an early Christmas present on Thursday evening with their walking tour of Whitnash and Warwick Gates.

Hundreds of families took to their doorsteps to catch an early glimpse of Father Christmas and wave at the team of volunteers as they completed a five mile circuit of the local estates.

Tier 3 restrictions mean the Warwickshire pub is only permitted to operate as a takeaway, leading to the cancellation of festive parties and popular family events planned throughout November and December.

Andy Griffin, General Manager of The Heathcote, organised the event in response to a post on a local community Facebook page which stated there wouldn't be a Santa's sleigh locally this year. "The Great British pub is the heart of the community and it's a two-way relationship. We have been overwhelmed by the encouragement and support we've received during the two national lockdowns and Tier 3 restrictions, so having the opportunity to thank local residents in this way is incredible."

"We've been lucky enough to welcome Father Christmas to The Heathcote for the last three years, so we were delighted to hear he'd still be able to join our socially distanced alternative event this year."

Commenting before the event, new resident Kyla Eason said "It's our first Christmas in Whitnash and we are very excited to see what this fabulous community does. Our little boy will love it. Thank you for going out of your way to make this year as normal as you can for us all"

Delighted spectators of all ages joined in the excitement on the night, including mum-of-three Kat Hammersley "This has made our year, thank you so much. The kids needed this and so do the adults. Amazing!"

Although not originally intended as a fundraising event, many people showed their gratitude by purchasing gift vouchers for use at the pub and donating to the company's nominated charity, Stand Up To Cancer.

Andy optimistically noted "This would normally be our busiest time of the year with Christmas parties, a bustling bar and festive family events. This year we have had the time and opportunity to do something totally different and the reaction has been fantastic. We are raising smiles, raising money for a worthy cause and definitely raising the bar for next year!"

ENDS