

NEW LEASE OF LIFE FOR WELLS MAYOR'S CHAIN

Loving care from goldsmith and jeweller Erica Sharpe has restored the Wells mayoral chain to its former glory.

Almost one and a half centuries of use had taken their toll on the chain, and the pendant was being held together with Blu-Tack, glue, sticky tape and safety pins.

It's been so long since it was cleaned and restored that city officials cannot recall the last time it received proper attention.

Erica spent 40 hours restoring and cleaning it during August – the month with fewest public engagements for the Mayor, Councillor Simon Davies. Over the past year the chain has been used for 250 engagements.

The chain, which dates back to 1862, was restored, polished and replated with gold. The solid gold pendant, dated 1902, had broken pieces removed and remade and two missing crosses added in nine carat gold. The links were also renewed.

“It was a bit of mess really – the pendant was held together with the contents of a stationary cupboard!” said Erica, who had a jewellery shop in Wells for more than 10 years before moving her business to the Borough Mall in Wedmore last year.

Lizzie Webb, the Town Clerk's assistant, said: “The time had come when the chain needed some tender loving care.”

Cllr Davies is delighted with the results: “What a fantastic job – the chain looks really good now. It was very dull before with bits missing and you couldn't see the detail.”

He added: “I feel more the part now; it really looks more like a mayoral chain than it did before.”

A painting showing the first Mayor of Wells, Alderman John Giffard Everett, wearing the chain of office in 1862 hangs in the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall.



Delighted: Mayor of Wells, Councillor Simon Davies and goldsmith Erica Sharpe with the restored mayoral chain.