

Mayor given fond farewell

BUSINESS, political and civic leaders from Oldham and Greater Manchester attended a dinner to support the outgoing Mayor of Oldham's charity appeal fund.

Sir Norman Stoller, Greater Manchester interim mayor Tony Lloyd and Bank of England representatives were among the guests for the Asian Business Dinner at Oldham's Eastern Pavilion banquet suite.

Entertainment on the night included Bollywood dancing and a comedy Asian-Elvis tribute singer called Patelvis.

The dinner raised £2,500 towards outgoing mayor councillor Ateeque Ur-Rehman's charity appeal for the year.

It was hosted by Professor Basma Ellahi and Jay Allen, with the main speech coming from former Oldham rugby league star Terry Flanagan, who later moved into business and is also the trustees' chairman at Mahdlo Youth Zone. Mr Flanagan highlighted how lessons learned from sport can be applied to business. He said hard work, the right attitude, being strong and aiming to be the best, year-on-year, had helped

him achieve success as a rugby player and were all equally important for business too, he said. He also encouraged business people to get involved with community and charity activities.

He said: "Oldham is a hotbed of talent and a great place. It's important to get out there, to break out of your comfort zone, to meet new people and network. Getting involved in sport, charity and community activities are great ways of networking too."

Mr Flanagan also outlined forthcoming fundraising activities to support Mahdlo including a 40-mile walk from Oldham to Runcorn in July, called the King Cotton Challenge.

The outgoing mayor, Cllr Ur-Rehman, thanked guests for their donations and reviewed his year in office with Mayoress Cllr Yasmin Toor.

He said: "We wanted to make my year in office a people's mayoralty and highlight democracy. We have had 700 engagements over the year and received 75 school visits to the mayor's parlour, where people have asked about the council's role and history."

He paid tribute to the hard work of Asian immigrants who first came to Oldham in the 1960s, adding: "My grandfather



FROM left, event host Professor Basma Ellahi, Patelvis, Interim Mayor of Greater Manchester Tony Lloyd, then Oldham Mayor Ateeque Ur-Rehman, Mayoress Yasmin Toor, Sir Norman Stoller, Sharman Birtles, High Sheriff of Greater Manchester; Councillor John Holden, Mayor of Trafford; host Jay Allen and guest Steve Lowe

came here unable to speak or write English. Imagine if you'd told him that, one day, he would have a grandson who was the mayor of Oldham! Lots of people here at this dinner have put in hard work and have got the right environment with equal opportunities. The only barrier to success is how hard you work."

The event organisers included Kashif Ashraf and Metro Business Network. Guests included John

Young, the north-west agent for The Bank of England; Steve Lowe, who recently received a Special Recognition Award at the 2016 Oldham Business Awards; Sir Norman Stoller, Sharman Birtles, the high sheriff of Greater Manchester; Mayor of Trafford Cllr John Holden, and Bury South MP Ivan Lewis, who is campaigning to become the first elected mayor of Greater Manchester.



PATELVIS with Basma Ellahi, the mayor and Tony Lloyd

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