



Norfolk 2012-13

I started my year as High Sheriff in drought which quickly turned to flood and the wettest of summers and winters, and it ends with a cold and late spring. Climate change would appear to be living up to the predictions of the scientists. We are very lucky in Norfolk to have some of the leading institutions nationally and globally developing new crops and working with genomics. The prosperity of our rural communities is going to depend on our ability to bring forward these new and innovative technologies. It is against that background of a financial challenge that I wanted to try and promote positive action in Norfolk.

I felt strongly at the beginning of my year as High Sheriff that I wanted to do something which helped vulnerable young people in Norfolk. Every time one opens a newspaper there are cuts which particularly hit the voluntary sector. If I have learnt one thing this year it is that volunteers at every level are the glue which binds our communities in Norfolk together. Many of those volunteers give their time unconditionally and unstintingly to help others. I salute them and thank

them for all that they do. Without their help Norfolk would be a very different and poorer place.

I know fundraising is not everyone's idea of the role of a High Sheriff but thanks to the generous support that I have received, the High Sheriff's Fund 'Nourishing Norfolk Together' has been able to contribute £85,000 to the Norfolk Community Foundation. I have not done this for myself but in the full knowledge that with every £100 raised we can make a very real difference to the people at the sharp end of delivery on the ground. There are so many small charities and organisations which are making a real difference to the lives of vulnerable young people. To be able to give people a job, self-respect and a sense of worth is to save so much in benefits, and the effects of crime and drug and alcohol abuse in the future. So much of this starts with a close family and the ability to give love and unconditional support to children and young people.

I was asked the other day what had been the highlight of my year. The answer is the inspirational people

whom I have met from all walks of life. It is the greatest honour that one's county can bestow and like everything else in life one gets out what one puts in. I have been so lucky and am very grateful for the opportunity to give back a little to beloved Norfolk.

I know that Sarah Leicester who succeeds me will do a brilliant job. Her smile will light up the darkest of places. Floreat Sheriffia!

This year has been incredible – Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, all the celebrations which surrounded the Olympics and Paralympics, the feel-good factor which Team GB generated. Perhaps we now stand on the threshold of a new era where we will see a return to core family values and the principles of helping one another. Archbishop Justin and Pope Francis will I hope lead us along that path. It is time for a change – 'To give and not to count the cost'. □

Henry Cator OBE DL
High Sheriff of Norfolk 2012-13



PHOTOGRAPH: ROB WARD PHOTOGRAPHY, NORFOLK

High Sheriff's Award Ceremony at Norwich Cathedral – 18 March 2013.