



News from and about Members

Kent 2012-13

One of the early tasks for my year was to present long service awards for Kent Police. I was immediately struck by the modesty of the recipients, but more importantly by the huge lift such an event provides for family, friends and the peer group of the recipient.

In Kent we have a modest High Sheriff's Fund, ably administered by the Kent Community Foundation and this enables some worthwhile, albeit small, cash awards to be made by each High Sheriff during his or her year.

In the past this has tended to be done on a one-to-one basis during visits, but as my year progressed more and more awards presentations showed me the importance of community recognition for special contributions, however small. I therefore decided to initiate an Awards Reception and was lucky enough to be able to do this in Chilham Castle, a private house not usually open for public events.

I also decided that this should not be based on any form of competitive process. I had enjoyed numerous uplifting visits in the community and I

simply singled out the visits which had made the greatest impression and asked my contacts to nominate an individual or group of individuals for High Sheriff's Awards. Most of the nominations were for volunteers, but there were also several employees recognised who go the extra mile in their jobs.

The cash sums ranged from £50 to members of a team award up to the highest at £250. Thirty-two awards were presented to individuals from 19 different organisations.

We recognised Street Pastors, Coroners' Court Support Service, Kent Crimestoppers, prison staff, Scouts, court ushers, cadet officers, Victim Support, Neighbourhood Watch and a brave young man who had survived a fatal road traffic accident and now speaks at a harrowing Kent Police presentation on road safety.

In addition to this I have promoted litter awards in primary schools and hosted the prison service awards at HMP East Sutton Park.

I was able to sponsor Dartford Fighting Chance Judo Club, financially assisted by Kent People's Trust, for the National Crimebeat Awards, and they were thrilled to win their category (see pages 6 and 7). I also sponsored a farmer who is very proactive in his local area in fighting rural crime for a Kent Community Safety Award, for which was runner-up.

Finally, with the help of the Chairman of the Kent County Council and the Mayor of Medway, I have initiated a new raft of community awards which will be administered by the Kent Association of Local Councils, to recognise contributions at grassroots parish and borough level.

There will be many variations on this theme but there is no reason why this should not be a fertile area for High Sheriffs both in terms of job satisfaction and in terms of raising Shrievalty profile, which all helps in answering the interminable questions on 'what does the High Sheriff do!' □

Michael Bax Esq
High Sheriff of Kent 2012-13



The High Sheriff with the recipients of High Sheriff's Awards.