



Influencing beyond boundaries

Below: Declaration ceremony at St Andrew's Church, Roker, Sunderland with Sue Winfield, Lord-Lieutenant, my wife Susan and His Honour Judge Sloan QC, Honorary Recorder of Newcastle

Bottom left: At Gateshead North East Ambulance Service Training Centre with Helen Ray, Chief Executive, and other High Sheriffs

Bottom right: At the North East Land, Sea and Air Museum (NELSAM) with Jess Ord, High Sheriff's Police Cadet, a Police Guardian and Winton Keenen, Chief Constable of Northumbria

THE SHRIEVAL year started anxiously as to how we could conduct my Declaration ceremony within the COVID rules. I was determined not to be one of the many undertaking this on Zoom. A benefit of the restrictions was that coordinating the ceremony was less complex than normal when many more people are invited. In this case we only had to worry about the rule of six! It was a wonderful occasion with the sun shining on the ceremony after earlier rain and snow with freezing northerly winds.

After the ceremony and accompanying publicity, more invitations to actual events started arriving in the first month than my predecessor had received in the previous year due to COVID constraints. We started opening up, with one of my first engagements

being the Newcastle Cathedral Rededication Service. This celebrated a year-long restoration project which has revived the cathedral, turning it into a dynamic hub for the city. It now has a flexible seating arrangement and archaeological features have been restored which promote its heritage.

The visit to the new training facility of the North East Ambulance Service with other High Sheriffs from the region was a great experience. It is really well equipped with life-like adult and child mannequins that react to treatment – amazing technology that helps train our intrepid volunteers.

Inspiring and supporting young cadets

One of the highlights so far has been working with cadets whether they are police, air or army. It has been a privilege to be guest of honour and present awards and listen to some very inspiring stories from our young leaders and amazing volunteers. Cadets have had the opportunity to do things that others only dream about, gaining incredible experience. Research by the University of Northampton published in May 2021 noted that cadet participation was directly linked to increased social mobility, improved educational outcomes and greater employability.

I have heard their stories of life-changing experiences and the building of self-confidence that allowed them to meet challenges and gain knowledge they didn't think was possible. That self-belief provides them with the confidence to take on anything. It has been a privilege to inspire and support the young cadets, so much so that I





Above left: At Police Cadets' event led by Sgt Simon Auty, Northumbria Police Professional Development

Above right: At Newcastle Freedom of the City Parade with the Lord-Lieutenant, Cllr Habib Rahman, Lord Mayor of Newcastle, and Lt Col Paul Smyth MBE VR, CO 5th Bn Royal Regiment of Fusiliers

Far right: At Flying Circus Award Ceremony with Fit Lt Gary Richardson and Air Cadets

have appointed for the first time two High Sheriff's Police Cadets in Tyne and Wear. I aim to attend every cadet office in the region.

Aligning with the Lord-Lieutenant

It has been an honour to work hand in hand with Tyne and Wear's Lord-Lieutenant, Sue Winfield OBE, who has provided me with tremendous support and guidance. Her inspiration and enthusiasm has been infectious in supporting many communities and serving the North East.

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ARY News, the largest news channel in Pakistan, asked me for an interview which they aired as a key news item in Pakistan. They wanted to get a view on the diversity and opportunities at all levels provided in the UK for those of Pakistani origin.

What next?

Invitations to actual events are now coming through thick and fast! It's a real privilege and honour to have this incredible and influential role and so far I have accepted every invitation. I hope the reduced constraints on activities enable me to continue to promote the role of High Sheriff and to lend my support to many different communities.

As I reach the halfway point of the shrieval year I'm especially looking forward to the High Sheriff's Community Awards to promote and reward the voluntary sector. This reminds me to acknowledge the generous contributions made by the many foundations and trusts which have helped raise funds to support the work of community and voluntary groups across the county. These funds and awards promote activity and projects that help to improve the quality of life and ambition for young people across Tyne and Wear.

◆ **Farooq Hakim**
High Sheriff of Tyne and Wear 2021-22



Photo: Steve Brock Photography

At Sunderland Maritime Museum with HRH The Princess Royal, the Lord-Lieutenant and Cllr Henry Trueman, Mayor of Sunderland



A news item on ARY News, Pakistan